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THE PASTORAL MINISTRY
IN THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY,
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
THOMAS BOSTON, JOHN WILLISON AND JOHN ERSKINE

by

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To My Father

STEPHEN A. WOODRUFF, JR.

A faithful pastor in the Reformed tradition

who has been an inspiration to me

and to those who have been under his pastoral care

PREFACE

Seward Hiltner has written that

> to a greater degree than in any other theological discipline, we lack in pastoral theology a sense of identification with our pastoral roots and heritage. . . . This situation demands that we inquire into some significant orders of shepherding data from the past as well as from the present.[1]

My desire to understand the image and practice of the pastoral ministry in history and my interest in the heritage of Presbyterianism was heightened by the quadricentennial of the Scottish Reformation, which was being observed when I considered beginning research in church history. After the Very Rev. Principal Emeritus Hugh Watt suggested reading about Scottish pastors in the eighteenth century, I realized that there was an opportunity to explore the thought of men whose conception of the ministry influenced and was like that of Scotsmen, such as John Witherspoon, who contributed much to the establishment and growth of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., of which I am a minister.

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[1]Seward Hiltner, Preface to Pastoral Theology (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958), pp. 70-71.

My design has been to focus attention on men known for faithful pastoral care and, yet, whose implementation of their conception of the pastor's role and work had not been closely studied to determine their place and distinctive contributions in the Christian tradition of the cure of souls. In this work I have attempted to supply the want of an extended study about men like Thomas Boston and John Erskine, which was noted by John T. McNeill in his survey of notable Presbyterian pastors.[1]

For the helpful suggestions and constructive criticism of Rev. Professor A. C. Cheyne and Rev. Professor William Tindal in this research I am especially grateful. Besides the Rev. Dr. J. A. Lamb of the New College Library, librarians and staff members of the following libraries have made their resources available: University of Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Scottish Record Office, Signet Library, Edinburgh Central Public Library, University of Glasgow, Trinity College, and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. For financial loans to pursue research in Scotland I am indebted to two friends. Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to my wife Joanne for her support in this enterprise, which at times has been tried but has remained true.

S.A.W.

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[1]John T. McNeill, A History of the Cure of Souls (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1952), pp. 258, 268-69.

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CHAPTER I

THE PASTOR'S CONCEPTION OF HIS ROLE

Introduction

By the beginning of the eighteenth century a biblical and Reformed view of the ministry was well established in the thinking of Scottish pastors. The doctrine of the ministry outlined in the sixteenth century Second Book of Discipline was essentially the same as that in the First Book of Discipline, which reflected the position of the continental Reformers, especially John Calvin, who had influenced John Knox. The adoption of the Westminster Standards by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in the seventeenth century reinforced that doctrine. Those documents so influenced concepts of the pastor's role that even during the period of Episcopal ascendancy in the seventeenth century Scottish Episcopalians differed little from Presbyterians in their attitude toward pastoral care.[1]

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[1]Thomas Weir concluded that Presbyterian and Episcopal pamphlets of the seventeenth century, stripped of their polemical overlays, show that both parties expected essentially the same pastoral ministry. Thomas Edward Weir, "Pastoral Care in the Church of Scotland in the Seventeenth Century" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Library, University of Edinburgh), p. 19.

However, what actually assured the continuance of fundamental Reformed beliefs about the nature of the ministry into the following century was the establishment of Presbyterianism and the restoration of Presbyterian ministers to leadership in the Scottish Church in 1690. In effect this Revolution Settlement guaranteed that the image of the pastor found in the Books of Discipline, the Westminster Standards, and the works of Calvinistic theologians would be held up for young men entering the ministry to emulate. Men like Thomas Boston of Ettrick and John Willison of Dundee who were ordained at the outset of the 1700's thus gained their views from teachers and leaders who interpreted the pastoral ministry in terms of pre-1660 Scottish Presbyterianism.

The Definition of "Pastor"

Boston and Willison along with John Erskine were representative eighteenth century Evangelicals who defined "pastor" in biblical and Reformed terms. Agreeing with earlier Calvinistic interpreters of Scripture they taught that according to the New Testament a pastor was a man called by God to serve in the office of the ministry for the order of the church. He was not thereby elevated to a higher spiritual plane than other Christians, because they shared in the priesthood of all believers, but he did occupy a respected position of leadership.

A pastor was to be regarded as a minister of the church universal in which there was a parity of the ministry, although he was to serve a particular congregation by preaching the Word of God, dispensing the sacraments, and administering discipline. Before assuming his office a pastor had to have a call to a specific charge and had to be ordained by other pastors, who adjudged him to be worthy of the position by virtue of his Christian devotion, good character, adequate knowledge of the Bible, and ability to preach and teach. Boston, Willison and Erskine derived these basic points from their predecessors in the Church of Scotland of the previous two centuries. They in turn developed those principles to meet the demands of the pastorate in their day as they understood those demands.

The Call to the Ministry

The necessity of being called to the ministry before assuming the office, which was clearly stated by leaders of the Church of Scotland since the Reformation, was reaffirmed by Boston, Willison and Erskine. Statements in the First and Second Books of Discipline declaring a call to be essential were echoed in the Westminster Form of Church Government, which said, "No man ought to take upon him the office of a minister of the

Word, without a lawful calling."[1] By "lawful calling" these documents referred primarily to the whole procedure by which the Church selected and examined candidates and then authorized them for the ministry by ordination and installation. This outer call was the Church's expression of its belief that a man had an inner call from God to the ministry.[2] Boston, Willison and Erskine also believed that the pastor's call was essential because according to the New Testament this office and its officers were God's gift to the Church for its welfare. Before his ordination Thomas Boston reflected on Matthew 4:19 that Christ makes men fishers of men "by his call, which is twofold, outward and inward, by setting them apart to the office of the ministry."[3] Later when preaching a sermon entitled "Ministers in the Church Appointed by Christ," which he based on Ephesians 4:11-12, he declared that Jesus gave suitably qualified officers, including pastors, to the church "to labour in

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[1]"The Form of Church Government," The Confession of Faith (Glasgow: William Duncan, 1753), p. 532. Cf. statements made in the Books of Discipline. William Dunlop (ed.), A Collection of Confessions of Faith, II (Edinburgh: James Watson, 1722), 523-24, 770-71.

[2]Ministers are "those who are called by God." Second Book of Discipline, Dunlop, (ed.), A Collection . . ., II, 770.

[3]Thomas Boston, The Whole Works of the Late Reverend Thomas Boston of Ettrick, ed. Samuel M'Millan (Aberdeen: George and Robert King, 1848), V, 7.

dispensing gospel ordinances, for restoring and perfecting saints, who are so often out of frame, and for gathering in the elect, and increase of grace in those that are converted."[1] From the same passage and related texts John Erskine drew the same basic conclusion that God "hath set apart a peculiar order of men" to serve him in the Gospel ministry.[2] The importance of this office meant that anyone who entered the pastorate without God's specific guidance was guilty of a serious offense. Summarizing the principal sins of the Church, John Willison lamented that "many preachers are running unsent, and using means to thrust themselves into the vineyard, not waiting for God's call, nor regarding the prayers or inclinations of his people."[3] These pastors like their predecessors maintained that the character

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , IV, 315. Cf. p. 309 on the necessity of a call deduced from this passage in Ephesians.

[2]John Erskine, Discourses, I (Edinburgh: William Creech and Archibald Constable, 1798), 154. Cf. pp. 3, 80 where Erskine refers to pastors as "men of God" who "minister in his name by his appointment."

[3]John Willison, The Practical Works of the Rev. John Willison (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1844), p. 940. Vide Jeremiah 23:21. In 1786 Hugh Cunningham, pastor of Tranent, questioned the seriousness of one young man to be an useful minister because he entered the ministry only after being disappointed in two attempts to enter other work. Hugh Cunningham, Diary, University of Edinburgh, New College Library MSS, p. 50. At the end of the century an Evangelical minister by the name of John Love exclained, "Horrible is the guilt of that man, who presses into God's vineyard without his leave,--who is not called into it by the great Master." John Love, Memorials of John Love (Glasgow: Maurice Ogle & Son, 1857), I, 357.

and responsibilities of the pastorate demanded that individuals must have a call to that work.[1]

The confirmation of God's leading thus occupied a prominent place in the consideration of the pastoral vocation. As a probationer Thomas Boston reviewed his evidence for an "ordinary call." The objective factors he looked for to sustain his subjective inclinations included:

1) Knowledge of the doctrine of the Christian religion above that of ordinary professors, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17 . . . .
2) Aptness to teach, some dexterity of communicating unto others that knowledge, 1 Tim. iii.2: 2 Tim. ii. 2 . . . .
3) A will some way ready to take on the work of preaching the gospel, 1 Pet. v. 2 . . . .
4) The call of the Church.[2]

With respect to his inner conviction Boston testified in words reminiscent of John Calvin's definition of the pastor's secret call,

> I had notwithstanding some desire to that work [of preaching the gospel], which . . . did not arise from the desire of worldly gain; . . . neither was it the love of vain glory, . . . but that I might be capable to do something for God.[3]

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[1]"Though all may read the word, yet none ought to preach it, but those who, being qualified for it, are duly called thereto." Boston, The Whole Works . . . , II, 423. Cf. IV, 309; V, 23; Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 831; Erskine, Discourses, I, 3, 80.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , V, 24.

[3]Ibid. Calvin defined this inner call as "the honest testimony of our heart, that we accept the office offered to us, not from ambition or avarice, or any other unlawful motive, but from a sincere fear of God, and an ardent zeal for the

In spite of all the reasons confirming his place in the ministry this aspiring preacher kept praying for assurance of his call. He felt that without a definite sense of vocation he could not face discouragements in his work, benefit those whom he served, or stand with his parishioners before the final tribunal of God.[1] John Erskine examined the validity of his call, but he did not express the anxiety which Boston felt in his desire for an inward emotional confirmation of his call. According to his biographer Erskine's call was confirmed by his interest in theology and practical religion; his abilities which were suited for the clerical profession; his estimate that the ministry was "the most extensive sphere of usefulness to the Church of Christ, and to mankind which could be given to him"; and by his strong inner conviction that he should be a pastor in spite of his family's objections and the attraction of other opportunities.[2]

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edification of the Church." John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion (IV.iii.11), trans. John Allen (7th ed.; Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936), II, 326.

[1]Thomas Boston, Memoirs, edited by George H. Morrison (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1899), p. 83.

[2]Henry Moncrieff Wellwood, Account of the Life and Writings of John Erskine (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Company, 1818), pp. 28-29, 33, 397. John Spence, another Evangelical, suggested criteria similar to those used by his contemporary. "From the experience of the blessed effects of the gospel upon his own heart;--from the success of his application to study, in

Although Erskine was not hindered by Boston's brand of emotional feeling, he did value the strong conviction that he belonged in the ministry and practiced a devotional life. His maintenance of the Reformed position contrasted with a growing number of pastors in his day, whose suspicion of emotions in religious experience resulted in their limiting the determination of a call to rational considerations. An apt statement of that view was made by Thomas Gordon.

> This choice of the ministerial office, after a deliberate and serious attention to the importance of it, and of every discouragement and opposition that may be thrown in the way of discharging it with fidelity may be justly deemed a call to the holy ministry. Every thing beyond this, in the course of ordinary Providence, hath too much the appearance of enthusiastic presumption. And such a call every intending minister ought to feel; and he may stand upon it without danger of being exposed to raillery or censure from any judge of rational conduct and real propriety.[1]

Men who took this stand virtually identified God's call with the acquiring of intellectual skills and a willingness to undertake

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attaining a competent measure of gifts for instructing others;--and from other favourable circumstances in providence, inviting him, I may say, to take part of the ministry;--one may be comfortably satisfied of his call from God." John Spence, Discourses on Several Evangelical Subjects (Edinburgh: Murray & Cochran, 1779), p. 16.

[1]Thomas Gordon, Plain Sermons on Practical Subjects, Adapted to Different Characters (Edinburgh: Charles Elliot, 1786), II, 492. Alexander Gerard, a leader of the so-called Moderate party of the Church, stated in a similar vein that a due sense of the responsibilities of the pastorate was fundamentally one's call. Alexander Gerard, The Pastoral Care (London: T. Cadell Junior and W. Davies, 1799), pp. 3-4, 11.

a difficult task. Against this position Boston, Willison and Erskine upheld the Reformed tradition of looking not only for outward signs but also for inward signs of commitment and of conviction that one had been called to the pastoral office by God.

The Task of the Pastor

Scrutinizing Scripture for their image of the pastor, those who stood in the Reformed tradition emphasized that ministers were commissioned to convert men to faith in Jesus Christ and to train them to be his faithful disciples. Evangelism, that is, the preaching of the way of salvation and calling on men to repent of their sins and to commit themselves in faith to Jesus Christ, was the first responsibility of the pastor. Boston understood this to be implied in the nature of the office. Ministers, like the first disciples, were called to be fishers of men so their work was "to endeavour to bring souls to Christ."[1] The large proportion of evangelistic sermons in Boston's and Willison's works show that both these men felt primarily concerned to win converts. Erskine also believed that the end of the ministry was to win souls to Christ. Before a number of other ministers he stated emphatically, "Our great

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , V, 11. Cf. IV, 317.

business, is to instruct guilty creatures how they may be recovered from the ruins of their apostasy, serve God acceptably here, and enjoy him for ever hereafter."[1] Pastoral responsibility did not end with the conversion of sinners, however. Once people responded to the challenge to follow Jesus Christ there was the need to promote "practical godliness," i.e. the practice of the Christian life. Boston, Willison and Erskine agreed that the pastor taught and applied the truths of Scripture, "the only rule of faith and manners," in order to turn men not only to God, but away from sinful practices.[2] The two aspects of the pastor's task were summarized by these men in

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[1]Erskine, Discourses, I, 53; cf. pp. 3, 92-93. This view was restated throughout the century by men of an Evangelical disposition. Among them Robert Burns' parish minister in Mauchline, William Auld, made the telling declaration, "Unless our chief aim in preaching is to bring men to Christ our labour to feed them is vain, and we spend our strength for nought." William Auld, The Pastoral Duty Briefly Explained and Recommended (Glasgow: John Robertson, 1763), p. 12. Cf. Robert Walker, Sermons on Practical Subjects (Edinburgh: W. Gray, 1784), II, 1. John Smith, Lectures on the Nature and End of the Sacred Office (Glasgow: at the University Press, 1798), pp. 319-20.

[2]Boston described the pastor as fitted "to apply the word for working on people's affections, and for advancing practical godliness." The Whole Works . . . , IV, 313. Willison followed a similar train of thought when he declared, "This New Testament minister not only preaches up the excellency of the righteousness of Christ, and of faith therein, for our salvation; but he also insists upon the necessity of repentance for sin, and reformation from it: he presses the practice of holiness and all moral duties, to complete the character of a true Christian." The Practical Works . . . , p. 835. John Erskine saw that since men did not love truth and holiness the minister's business was "to persuade

terms of the meaning of that task for the church. Thomas Boston used a strained metaphor to illustrate the teaching of Ephesians 4:11, 12 about the pastor's service. He compared ministers to masons in that ministers build the body of Christ

> when they are instruments in Christ's hand to lay new stones in the building; that is, to convert the elect, and to fix and raise up others that are already laid; being instruments of the growth of converts in knowledge, faith and holiness.[1]

Erskine spoke of the minister as having oversight of the flock of God to which he was supposed to declare the whole counsel of God for the welfare of their souls. He interpreted the passage in the fourth chapter of Ephesians to mean that ministers of God were set apart "to explain the sacred oracles, to feed his [God's] people with knowledge and understanding, and to beseech sinners in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God."[2] The pastor's work was to build and to strengthen the church of God, which he served through proclaiming the way of salvation and giving instruction in the Christian faith and life.

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such to hate and renounce, what is their chief delight; to engage them in a course of life to which they are strongly averse." Discourses, I, 120.

[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , IV, 315. Willison deduced from similar texts that "the great and valuable ends of a gospel ministry" are "the conversion of sinners, and reconciling them to God" and "the perfecting of the saints, and edifying of the body of Christ." The Practical Works . . . , p. 840.

[2]Erskine, Discourses, I, 154; cf. I, 1-10.

In contrast to the above position a large number of ministers demonstrated as the century progressed that they believed ethical instruction, which was not necessarily based on evangelism or a doctrinal foundation, was the minister's main business. While men who accepted the view of Boston, Willison and Erskine could be found throughout the century,[1] many agreed with Professor Alexander Gerard's statement that "the end of our office . . . is to form mankind to virtue."[2] This attitude was generally associated with the Moderatism that developed under the influence of rationalism and humanism during the age. Those who adopted Moderate theology tended to avoid the doctrines of the Church concerning sin, atonement, and salvation in favour of inculcating moral virtues, primarily on the basis of rational

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[1]For example, Thomas Snell Jones preached, "The great object, therefore, of the Christian ministry is, to bring men to the knowledge and experience of the salvation of Christ. The knowledge of salvation implies an acquaintance with its doctrine and its duties. The experience of salvation infers faith in these doctrines, and the discharge of these duties." Sermons (Edinburgh: William Whyte, 1816), p. 5. Cf. John Bruce, A Sermon Preached at the Opening of the Synod of Perth and Stirling (Edinburgh: Thomas Lumisden and John Robertson, 1735), p. 26; James Baine, The Pastoral Office (Glasgow: R. Urie and Company, 1745), p. 18; Auld, The Pastoral Duty . . . , p. 8.

[2]Alexander Gerard, Sermons (London: Charles Dilly, 1782), II, 393. Gerard taught his students that the business of the minister was "to enlighten the understandings of men with all religious knowledge, and to bring them to good practice." The Pastoral Care (London: T. Cadell Junior and W. Davies, 1799), p. 69. Cf. p. 15.

arguments. Robert Wodrow noted this trend away from basing ethics on doctrinal motives in the preaching of several ministers in Glasgow about 1725. In the sermons he heard they suggested that the chief goal of religion was to promote holiness. Then they defined holiness solely in terms of "the duties of righteousness between man and man" and of man to society.[1] By the latter half of the century the view that the promoting of morality was the first task of the ministry became widespread.[2]

Men of like persuasion with Boston, Willison and Erskine reacted sharply to this narrowing of the pastor's task. The point at issue was not the advocating of good works but the manner in which it was done. These Evangelicals believed that any teaching about morality had to be predicated on commitment to Christ. Without a renewal of heart by the Holy Spirit the individual would have neither the necessary desire nor the ability to live an upright life. Moreover, to be effective

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[1]Robert Wodrow, Analecta (Edinburgh: for the Maitland Club, 1842), III, 238-40. Cf. III, 155-56, 274-75.

[2]This was expressed in a letter to an Englishman from a clergyman in Scotland who explained about 1770, "Of old, it was customary to preach upon controverted and mysterious points of divinity, but it is now hoped that the generality of the Clergy confine the subject of their preaching to what has a tendency to promote virtue and good morals, and to make the people peaceable and useful members of society." Letter from a Church of Scotland Minister, quoted by Thomas Pennant, A Tour in Scotland, 1769 (Chester: John Monk, 1771), pp. 234-35.

exhortations to be godly had to stem from sound doctrinal teaching. John Willison made these convictions clear when he contended,

> The gospel minister teacheth, that all acceptable morality . . . is the proper result of the soul's union with the holy Jesus, our living head, . . . and of all sanctifying influences for the use of his members: and out of his fulness we must, by faith, receive those vital and quickening influences necessary for promoting sanctification in us.[1]

With these concepts in mind these men lamented the lack of doctrinal motives for good works in the preaching of many so-called Moderates. After hearing a virtuous life recommended solely on the basis of humanistic arguments by several such preachers Robert Wodrow commented,

> It's strange that the principall things in holynes, and the principall subject of the Gospell, Christ, and our dutys to him and his Father, and the Spirit's work, should alwise be omitted, even when occasion is fairly offered from the text and subject.[2]

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 835. Cf. Boston, Human Nature in Its Fourfold State (London: W. Lockhead, 1809), Part II, Head I, Section on the Corruption of the Will, pp. 94-95. After illustrating that in the Bible doctrines are used as motives for "social and relative duties" Erskine stated, "The doctrine of Christ crucified, is the instituted mean for producing and nourishing the divine life, and should be the centre of our sermons, in reference to, and dependence upon which, other subjects ought to be considered." Erskine, Discourses, I, 53-55. John Bruce expressed this idea in the axiom, "Christian knowledge is a needful foundation for Christian practice." Bruce, A Sermon . . . , p. 26.

[2]Wodrow, Analecta, III, 239.

On this subject John Erskine raised the question,

> Will they instruct men in the whole of their duty to God, to themselves, and to one another, who are unskilled in the word of righteousness, having never studied with care the nature and necessity of these duties, the hinderances in the practice of them, and the methods of removing those hinderances?[1]

Not all Moderates completely ignored doctrinal teaching or evangelism, however, as John Witherspoon's satire, Ecclesiastical Characteristics seemed to suggest.[2] Yet, the number who limited the pastor's objectives by their practice was sufficient to form an adverse climate of opinion in the Church, against which men like Willison and Erskine maintained a biblical and Reformed view of the minister's task.[3]

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[1]Erskine, Discourses, I, 26-27.

[2]Witherspoon charged all those who called themselves Moderates with limiting their preaching to social duties recommended only from rational arguments. John Witherspoon, Works (Edinburgh: Ogle & Aikman, 1805), VI, Table of Contents. Witherspoon later admitted that not all Moderates fitted the picture he drew because there were "different degrees of perfection, even amongst the moderates themselves." Works, VI, 151. George Hill, the Moderate leader who taught orthodox, Calvinistic theology, instructed his students to preach the gospel as "the spring of virtuous exertion." George Hill, Theological Institutes (Edinburgh: Bell & Bradfute, 1803), pp. 419-20. Church historian Hugh Watt has pointed out that "to say that the Moderate ignored and omitted the Gospel appeal . . . is one of those broad generalizations which, however pertinent and useful, will not fit every case." Hugh Watt, Thomas Chalmers and the Disruption (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1943), p. 6.

[3]Some men who concentrated on ethics at the beginning of their ministries later became convinced that they needed to

The Duties of the Pastor

In order to facilitate the work of leading men to commit themselves to Jesus Christ and to walk in the paths of righteousness, pastoral duties based on scriptural teaching were listed for Scottish pastors from the time of the Reformation. The First Book of Discipline, which appeared in 1560, assigned to the minister basically the threefold work named by John Calvin of preaching the Word of God, administering the sacraments and exercising discipline.[1] The Second Book of Discipline reaffirmed that these duties devolved on pastors and it clarified

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preach for conversion before looking for reformation in the lives of their congregations. Hugh Cunningham at first refrained from preaching "the doctrines of free grace," but in 1786, two years after his ordination, he resolved in his ministry "to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified." Hugh Cunningham, Diary, New College Library MSS, Edinburgh University, p. 135. Alexander Stewart of Moulin testified that at first he "preached against particular vices, and inculcated particular virtues. . . . I spoke of making the fruit good; but I was not aware that the tree was corrupt, and must first be itself made good, before it could bear good fruit." After a conversion experience in 1796, ten years later, he "began to teach and preach Jesus Christ, with some degree of knowledge and confidence." Alexander Stewart, Account of a Late Revival of Religion in a Part of the Highlands of Scotland (3rd ed.; Edinburgh: J. Ritchie, 1802), pp. 6-13.

[1]The First Book of Discipline, Dunlop, (ed.), A Collection . . . , pp. 523-29. Calvin summarized the pastor's duties after surveying Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 4:1; and Titus 1:9. "From these and similar passages, which

their nature.[1] In the course of the seventeenth century the three basic functions of the pastor were repeatedly spelled out. In 1638 the General Assembly ratified an Act of 1596 which listed responsibilities examinable by Church courts. This act stipulated that a minister was to be censured according to the degree of his fault if he did not habitually study the Scripture, pray, and attempt to grow spiritually; if he failed to oppose sin and corruption; if he was obscure in preaching and lacked spiritual zeal; if he was negligent in visiting the sick or caring for the poor; and if he showed partiality and dissembled wrongs. In addition discipline was to be meted out to those guilty of irregularities in the administration of the sacraments and to those who neglected the due exercise of discipline. The

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frequently occur, we may infer that the preaching of the gospel, and the administration of the sacraments, constitute the two principal parts of the pastoral office. . . . My present design [is] . . . only to show what is implied in the profession of those who call themselves pastors; namely, that they preside over the Church in that station, not that they may enjoy a respectable sinecure, but to instruct the people in true piety by the doctrine of Christ, to administer the holy mysteries, to maintain and exercise proper discipline." Calvin, Institutes . . . (IV.iii.6), II, 322-23.

[1]The Second Book of Discipline implied that prayer, the benediction, and the marriage blessing were part of teaching the Word of God in public and private. The administration of the sacraments was complementary to preaching in as much as spiritual knowledge was imparted visually as well as audibly. The exercise of discipline amounted to pronouncing sentences after lawful proceedings by the Session. Second Book of Discipline, Dunlop, (ed.), A Collection . . . , pp. 770-72.

same Assembly provided for examination of parish ministers by means of visits from their presbyteries in order to put the above act into force.[1] Seven years later in 1645 the General Assembly accepted The Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God and The Form of Presbyterial Church-Government, which named basically the same pastoral duties as the Second Book of Discipline. They reminded each clergyman that he should teach the Word of God in private as well as in public, administer the sacraments, and exercise a ruling power over the congregation.[2]

The Westminster documents and the seventeenth century acts of the Assembly influenced evaluations of pastoral ministries in the eighteenth century. In the early 1700's the General Assembly enjoined presbyteries to examine the work of pastors in terms of the above standards. By means of visiting individual parishes and of questioning men in presbytery "privy censures" presbyteries were to see how faithful "shepherds" of the "flocks"

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[1]The Principall Acts of the Solemne General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland, 1638, Sessions 23, 24 (Edinburgh: Andrew Hart, 1639), pp. 31-32.

[2]The pastor's teaching ministry included catechizing and apparently involved praying with and for his flock, reading the Scriptures in public, dispensing divine mysteries, and blessing the people from God. Care for the poor was an added task. The Confession of Faith (Glasgow: William Duncan, 1753), pp. 497, 514-17.

had been.[1] General Assembly recommendations made in the so-called Large Overtures of 1705 directed examiners in parish visitations to note the attention a pastor paid to preaching, catechizing, praying with the sick, calling on parishioners, administering the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, keeping Session meetings, and exercising discipline.[2] Questions asked in presbytery meetings for the private censure of members who were found remiss in their work called attention to the same

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[1]The Principal Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (Edinburgh: George Mosman, 1700, 1706), 1700, Act XXII, p. 28; 1706, Act XVI, p. 12. "October 20, 1701. This day the presbyterie . . . mett for prayer and privie censure in obedience to an act of the Assembly thereanent." The Publicke Records of the United Presbytries of Dundie, Miegle and Forfar, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 103, Vol. III, p. 215.

[2]Overtures Concerning the Discipline and Method of Proceeding in the Ecclesiastical Judicatories of the Church of Scotland, 1705, Chapter III, Section 6, Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1638-1842 (The Church Law Society, ed.; Edinburgh: The Edinburgh Printing and Publishing Company, 1843), pp. 358-61. The Large Overtures of 1705 were a reprinted version, with added chapters on the Synod and General Assembly, of overtures concerning church discipline and the method of proceeding in Church judicatories that were first submitted to the General Assembly in 1696. They were adopted in a much shortened form in 1707 as the Form of Process. Omitted sections which included directions for the election of elders, for ordination of ministers, for presbytery privy censures, and for presbytery parish visitations were recommended to the Church as useful guides by acts passed in 1707, 1710 and 1718. Ivo Macnaughton Clark, A History of Church Discipline in Scotland (Aberdeen: W. W. Lindsay, 1929), pp. 140-41.

tasks as being the most important duties of the pastor.[1] With the renewed interest of General Assembly in the faithfulness of pastors, Walter Steuart of Pardovan was able to quote the Acts of 1638 mentioned above as still being in force in 1709 when he published his collection of regulations for practice and procedure in the Church of Scotland.[2] It can be seen that when Boston and Willison began their ministries they were encouraged to follow the pattern of work set in the previous century. Yet by the end of the century the Acts of 1638 had been forgotten. In order to emphasize the responsibilities of the pastor, John Smith turned back to them as the foundation for determining the minister's duties in his generation as well as in previous years.[3] Thus, even after presbytery visits of pastors had ended and men began to ask on what authority the questions put at privy censures were founded, Evangelicals maintained this traditional pattern of duties.

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[1]Vide The Acts and Proceedings of the United Presbytries of Dundee and Forfar, 1710-1715; Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 103, Vol. VII, p. 38. A Register of the Acts and Proceedings of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 121, Vol. VIII, pp. 288-89.

[2]Walter Steuart of Pardovan, Collections and Observations Methodiz'd; Concerning the Worship, Discipline, and Government of the Church of Scotland (Edinburgh: Andrew Anderson, 1709), pp. 285-86.

[3]Smith, Lectures . . . , p. 256.

In sermons and lectures Boston, Willison, Erskine and other clergymen of their day subdivided the three-fold task of preaching the Word, administering the sacraments and exercising discipline into lists of particular assignments. Development of the concept of the minister's role is indicated to some extent by the areas of service emphasized by successive ministers. Boston showed his close attachment to the seventeenth century when he said that besides preaching the duties of the pastor were

> to pray with, and for the flock; to read the Scriptures publicly; to catechise, bless the people, and rule them; all which, and more belonging to their office is asserted by the Westminster Assembly, in the propositions concerning church government.[1]

John Willison like Boston felt that ministers should fulfil the

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , IV, 313. Cf.
"The Pastor is an ordinary and continual officer in the Church, prophesying of the time of the gospel.
"First, It belongs to his office,
"To pray with and for his flock, . . . to pray for the sick, even in private, . . . [and] in the publick execution of his office. . . .
"To read the Scriptures publickly. . . .
"To feed the flock, by preaching of the Word, according to which he is to teach, convince, reprove, exhort, and comfort.
"To catechise. . . .
"To dispense other divine mysteries.
"To administer the sacraments.
"To bless the people from God. . . .
"To take care of the poor.
"And he hath also a ruling power over the flock as a pastor." The Confession of Faith, pp. 514-17.
Elsewhere Boston made a passing remark about the duties of his calling, which included mainly preaching, administering the sacraments, and visiting families and the sick. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , IV, 79.

functions established preceding his ordination. Alarmed by a "new way of moral preaching and lax management" exhibited by young clergy he challenged his fellow ministers to dedicate themselves to preach the Church's doctrine of salvation through Christ, to teach "the first principles of Christianity" by catechizing young people, to visit homes to give counsel and instruction, to dispense the sacraments faithfully, and to uphold strict discipline. Elsewhere this pastor expressed his concern for ministering to the sick and dying as well.[1] By 1750 some Evangelicals had begun to accept modifications in the traditional view of what a pastor was expected to do. Among these was John Erskine, who advocated giving preference to duties that would benefit many at one time rather than just one individual or a few. He subdued concern for calling in homes and toned down discipline in keeping with the growing spirit of moderation among churchmen. Meanwhile he continued to support

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[1]"The duties of ministers to their people . . . [are] to preach the word faithfully, and dispense all ordinances to them; to have tender love and affection to their souls; to pray fervently for them; to reside amongst them, and watch carefully over them; to be partners of godly living unto them; and be willing to make the greatest condescensions for the edification and good of souls." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 677. Vide pp. 728, 834-40.

a basically biblical and Reformed view of pastoral responsibilities.[1] Even though some ministers modified the pattern of ministry followed by Boston and Willison, there was no significant trend away from the basic duties of that pattern during the last half of the century. John Smith, whose views corresponded with those of Evangelicals, and Alexander Gerard, a Moderate leader, agreed that the pastorate involved preaching; leading public worship; catechizing; visiting, counselling and praying for the sick and dying; visiting, teaching and exhorting families to live as Christians should live; conducting services of marriage; dispensing the sacraments; managing church discipline; and caring for the poor.[2] Other historical records confirm that at the end of the century parish ministers all over Scotland regarded this as the ideal pattern for the cure of souls although not all of the Established clergy put it into practice.[3]

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[1]Erskine told his congregation that the most important duties of the pastoral office were public preaching, leading public worship, dispensing the sacraments, catechizing children and others ignorant of fundamental principles of faith, visiting the sick and dying, reconciling differences between people, administering reproof with prudence and moderation, and living an exemplary life. Erskine, Discourses, I, 119-28. Cf. I, 33-34.

[2]Smith, Lectures . . . , pp. 236-37; Gerard, The Pastoral Care, pp. 100, 212-34, 235-387.

[3]William Singers stated that pastors were expected to officiate in public worship and preach twice every Sunday; to dispense the sacraments; to examine people from the catechisms of the Church and to visit families in alternate years; to preside in discipline; to visit, instruct, comfort, and pray

The Pastor's Sense of Duty

To a biblical pattern of pastoral tasks Boston, Willison and Erskine coupled a strong sense of duty. Contemplating his first pastorate Boston "was solidly affected with the weight of the work of the ministry."[1] His sense of obligation to serve his parish led him to ford swollen streams when visiting and to preach wrapped in a blanket under his gown in his own house when he was sick.[2] John Erskine demonstrated a similar spirit

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with the sick; to take part in Church courts; to employ authority to repress vice and compose dissensions; to mete out relief to the poor; to advise people in religious and moral affairs; and to superintend schools. William Singers, A Statement of the Numbers, the Duties, the Families, and the Livings, of the Clergy of Scotland (Edinburgh: George Ramsay and Company, 1808), pp. 5-8. John Sinclair, Analysis of the Statistical Account of Scotland, Second Part (London: John Murray, 1826), pp. 56-57, 63.

[1]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 93, 96. Vide statements about the weight of pastoral responsibility made by others on entering the office. Thomas Halyburton, Memoirs (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, n.d.), p. 188; Hugh Cunningham, Diary, p. xxi. Some Moderate ministers also displayed this dedication. Vide Thomas Somerville, My Own Life and Times (Edinburgh: Edmonston & Douglas, 1861), p. 126.

[2]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 143, 206. This seeming invitation of hardship in the pastorate was characteristic of other Evangelicals during the century. James Calder of Croy having carried out all his ministerial duties in 1764, although his only daughter died and he suffered from ill health, testified, "Let none after me, decline his errands, in all weathers, and at all hazards; for I have many times found them to be health both to soul and body." James Calder, Diary, ed. William Taylor (Stirling: Peter Drummond, 1875), p. 38. A man did not present his child in baptism one Sunday because John Mill's daughter died during the week. Later Mill reprimanded the man asking, "Did ye think that

of complete devotion to the work of the ministry when he urged his associates, "Employ the greatest and best part of your time, in the duties of your office, or in preparation for these duties."[1] The dedication of these men was seen in the fulfilment of pastoral duties, but their sense of duty focussed on the souls under their charge rather than on the mechanics of preaching, dispensing sacraments and administering discipline. Boston and Willison indicated this tenor of thinking when they reminded other ministers that they should be seriously concerned about the souls under their care.[2] This attitude was also embodied in John Erskine's declaration that a pious minister "counts those

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the death of my daughter was going to prevent me from doing my duty at church?" John Willcock, A Shetland Minister of the Eighteenth Century (Kirkwall: The Leonards, 1897), p. 78.

[1]Erskine, Discourses, I, 107. An extraordinary case of concern for fulfilling one's pastoral duties is found in the minutes of the United Presbyteries of Dundee and Forfar for August 1, 1716. They reported the desire of a Dundee pastor for his fellow ministers to assist him by preaching in rotation at his regular worship service on a week day, because his time was limited for sermon preparation and preaching by the amount of calling, catechizing and counselling he had to do. "Mr. Samuel Johnstoun in his letter of excuse representing the great work they have just now upon their hands relative to visiting, examining and seeing sick persons craved one round of the Presbytrie to preach at Dundee on the weekdays." The presbytery granted his request after his colleague Mr. Kincork further explained the situation. The Acts and Proceedings of the United Presbytries of Dundee and Forfar, 1715-17, Scottish Register Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 103, Vol. VIII, p. 88.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , V, 28-29; Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 831, 833.

hours lost in which he is not either getting good to his own soul, doing good to the souls of others, or acquiring greater fitness for his important trust."[1] According to his biographer, Erskine displayed that attitude of dedicated concern for his people as he carried out his work among them.[2] Evangelical pastors expressed their sense of duty in the biblical concepts which underlay it. They identified themselves with Ezekiel, who regarded himself as a watchman on the watchtower of Zion responsible for warning his people of their peril caused by sin. With the Apostle Paul they felt compelled to spend themselves as ambassadors of reconciliation, soldiers of the Faith, and workmen who sought the approval of God by proclaiming the Gospel of salvation through their Lord Jesus Christ.[3] These pastors' tasks were not the

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[1]Erskine, Discourses, I, 6. Near the end of the century this thought was repeated by John Smith, who said to other pastors, "We should reckon every day and hour lost, in which we have not an opportunity of doing something for the glory of God and the souls of our people." Smith, Lectures . . . , p. 237.

[2]Moncreiff Wellwood, . . . John Erskine, pp. 34, 398-99.

[3]Vide Erskine, Discourses, I, 1-10, 153-54. "Ministers are in scripture designed by the names of rulers, teachers, stewards, shepherds, servants, watchmen, labourers, soldiers, and the like, all of them expressive of both great trust and great toil. Whoever would exercise any one of them aright, must have many wearisome days, and restless nights; much fatigue of body, and anxiety of mind." Smith, Lectures . . . , p. 324. "Ministers of Christ are in Scripture called Ambassadors, Stewards, Overseers, Shepherds, Pastors, and Teachers, all characters of honour and dignity: and as these speak a great and necessary work, to be attended and discharged; so they intimate their being called,

limit of their concern. Rather, duties were seen only as means to the end, the ultimate responsibility being that of winning men to Christ and of strengthening believers in the faith.

The sense of responsibility men like Willison and Erskine felt caused them to speak against any attitude of indifference to ministerial tasks, which to them denoted irresponsibility in the ministry. The contrast between diligence and negligence among pastors was observed by John Willison in 1733. Apprehensive about young clergymen who seemed eager to be presented to a parish by a patron but showed little concern for parishioners, Willison spoke out in his synod about the Church's danger and the minister's duty. In his sermon introduction he explained,

> I cannot conceal the dismal apprehensions which many well-wishers of our Zion have of her danger, from the view they have of many of the present young clergy and preachers, who seem to affect a new way of moral preaching and lax management, suited to the taste of many patrons and heritors; greedily snatch at presentations, and concur to

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and sent of God, and qualified by him for the doing of it. Those God sends with his message, he will furnish for the discharge of it; this is his promise." Andrew Boyd, The Character and Dignity of the Gospel Ministry (Glasgow: R. Urie and Company, 1746), p. 9. Boston felt that his responsibility to the members of his charge was based firmly on the call of God to speak unto them whether there were many or few. Boston, Memoirs, p. 211. Cf. Brand's statement, "I still considered, that the people and congregation God in his providence had set me over, were more my peculiar care for whose souls I [had] to answer, than others were." Brand was a contemporary of Boston. John Brand, Memoirs, National Library of Scotland MSS, 1668, p. 48. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 880.

> get themselves thrust into churches against the inclination both of the presbyteries and the people immediately concerned.[1]

Seventeen years later John Erskine lamented "the low state of religion in the Christian world," which he believed was due in part to men who entered the pastorate from selfish motives. To counteract the mistaken views of those who sought only a comfortable living in the ministry, Erskine reminded his fellow ministers that in assuming their office they had devoted themselves to serve God. This meant that the pastor should ask

> not, how shall I indulge my sloth, raise my fortune, or advance my reputation? But, how shall I glorify God, advance the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, and promote the spiritual and eternal welfare of precious and immortal souls?[2]

Vigorous, active, diligent and unwearied work in the Master's service was demanded. The conscientiousness of such ministers who felt accountable to God for the discharge of ministerial duties repeated decade after decade gains significance when

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 824. Cf. Robert Wodrow's comment when patronage was reintroduced in 1712: "Some, in reason termed Patronages a circumstantiall thing to the setlment of a Minister, but I fear it will be such a circumstance as will bring a very corrupt ministry!" Wodrow, Analecta, II, 120.

[2]Erskine, Discourses, I, 1-6. In the same sermon Erskine emphasized that pastoral work demanded a man's full attention by stating, "Ministers are not set apart to their office, to trifle away six days of the week, and then to go to the pulpit with whatever comes uppermost." Discourses, I, 36.

viewed in light of the conflicting interests that deterred other clergymen from devoting themselves to the cure of souls.

As the century progressed an increasing number of ministers seemed apathetic toward pastoral work. A minister of a secession church in Ayrshire, who claimed to be unbiased and objective, reported that in the late 1700's many of the clergy of the national Church

> became more supine and stinted in the discharge of their official duties. Family visitation according to the rules of the church fell into disuse--catechetical and scriptural examinations of sections of the parish in succession were by degrees, greatly if not wholly discontinued. . . . Attendance upon sickbeds was neglected or became comparatively rare, preparation for public service was less assiduous or evangelical. . . . Declining the active and energetic discharge of the duties of their spiritual and evangelical functions, too many of the pledged servants of the Lord betook themselves to literary study, or the culture of their glebes, perhaps farms, or to other secular concerns. They cultivated connection with the upper classes of society in their parishes, declining intercourse with those of low degree to whom the gospel is preached.[1]

Although Mitchell's generalizations were certainly coloured by judgments characteristic of secession ministers, the facts underlying his judgments were corroborated to some extent by the observations of others. In 1782 Lane Buchanan reported that "examining and praying with and for the people (are) ministerial

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[1]John Mitchell, "Memories of Ayrshire about 1780," ed. William Kirk Dickson, Miscellany of the Scottish History Society, VI, Vol. XXXIII of Publications of the Scottish History Society (Edinburgh: The Scottish History Society, 1939), pp. 302-303.

duties which, at this day, are not so much as named in the Western Hebrides."[1] After travelling through central Scotland and the Highlands James Haldane wrote that "Thurso had not been catechized (by the minister) for forty years," and that there was "no parochial visitation or examination performed by the clergy of (Inverness)."[2] To these statements could be added other evaluations, the sum of which was the opinion that many ministers were not doing pastoral work as they ought to have done it.[3] After weighing such evidence church historian

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[1]Lane Buchanan, Travels in the Western Hebrides, (1793), p. 219, quoted by John Macinnes, The Evangelical Movement in the Highlands of Scotland, 1688-1800 (Aberdeen: The University Press, 1951), p. 113.

[2]James Haldane, Journal of a Tour, pp. 74, 86, quoted by Macinnes, The Evangelical Movement . . . , p. 113.

[3]In 1790 Sir Walter Scott described a group of clergymen from the Borders who paid more attention to their cattle herds than to their parish "flocks." "The narrowness of their [ministers'] stipends here obliges many of them to enlarge their incomes by taking farms and grazing cattle. This, in my opinion, diminishes their respectability, nor can the farmer be supposed to entertain any great reverence for the ghostly advice of a 'pastor' . . . who perhaps the day before overreached him in a bargain. I would not have you to suppose there are no exceptions to this character, but it would serve most of them." Sir Walter Scott, Letter to William Clerk, August 6, 1790, quoted by J. G. Lockhart, The Life of Sir Walter Scott (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1896), p. 46. Donald Sage described a minister who became such a successful farmer that he was hired by a laird as a farm supervisor, and who Sage believed to be "like not a few clergymen of his party in the church of that day." Donald Sage, Memorabilia Domestica (Wick: W. Rae, 1889), p. 71. In 1799 Neil Douglas gave his estimate of the Moderate clergy of Argyll as follows: "What his boat is to one, his farm is to

John Macinnes concluded,

> It seems clear that the standard of pastoral work among the clergy showed a decline as the century moves to its close. Catechizing and visitation, once reckoned indispensable, were largely neglected.[1]

There is no doubt that as 1800 drew near men were being ordained who regarded the pastorate as a week-end avocation. One such individual openly maintained "that after the satisfactory discharge of his parish duties, a minister may enjoy five days in the week of uninterrupted leisure, for the prosecution of any science in which his taste may dispose him to engage."[2] In general those said to have held this viewpoint were identified as Moderates, i.e. members of the party that supported the law of patronage and enforced it in Church courts. However, some Moderate leaders were included among the clergymen who bewailed the decline in standards of pastoral care.

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another, and his horse-couping, droving, etc., to a third; and betwixt these serious avocations, the poor flock is left to the mercy of the foxes and the wolves." Neil Douglas, Journal of a Mission to Parts of the Highlands, 1799, p. 116, quoted by Macinnes, The Evangelical Movement . . . , p. 109. Thomas Somerville expressed his opinion that pastoral work in many parishes was not performed with the diligent effort exerted in places where secession churches offered competition to the Established Church. Somerville, My Own Life and Times, p. 87.

[1]Macinnes, The Evangelical Movement . . . , p. 113.

[2]Thomas Chalmers, Observations on a Passage in Mr. Playfair's Letter to the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, relative to the Mathematical Pretensions of the Scottish Clergy (Cupar, Fife: R. Tullis, 1805), p. 11. Chalmers later accepted a view of the ministry which directly contradicted this one. Vide Watt, Thomas Chalmers and the Disruption, p. 82.

Professor Gerard taught courses which provided suggestions for practising the duties of the pastorate, because he realized the need to counteract the mistaken opinion that a minister of a local congregation had only to preach, to dispense the sacraments, and to make a few calls.[1] George Hill, who was remembered and commended by all alike as a faithful pastor, also lectured on pastoral care with the hope of inspiring his students to take their work seriously.[2] The increase of ministers who were more interested in a stipend than in serving a parish was bemoaned by even Alexander Carlyle, a leading Moderate who prided himself on his liberal attitudes and social graces. Carlyle attributed the marred image of the ministry to the abuse of patronage by which patrons were able to put unworthy men into pulpits.[3] Not all

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[1]Gerard, The Pastoral Care, pp. 76, 97. This book contains his published lectures on pastoral care.

[2]Hill's lectures were published in his Theological Institutes (Edinburgh: Bell & Bradfute, 1803). Testimonies to Hill's exemplary ministry of calling on families and inculcating knowledge of the Christian faith and life can be found in the following works: George Cook, The Life of the Late George Hill (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable & Company, 1820). The Edinburgh Christian Instructor, XXIV (1825), 545-46.

[3]"In the mean time, on account of many unfortunate circumstances, one of which is, that patrons, now that by help of the Moderate interest, as it is called, there is no opposition to their presentations, have restored to them that right they so long claimed, and for most part give them the man they like best; that is to say, the least capable, and commonly the least worthy, of all the probationers in their neighbourhood. The unfitness of one of the professors of divinity, and the influence he has in providing for young men of his own fanatical cast, increases this

Moderates contributed to the image of pastoral negligence, though. George Hill and Alexander Gerard exerted their influence in the classroom to mould pastors. George Ridpath, who supplied Thomas Boston's pulpit on one occasion, left a diary which recounts his faithful parish work and also records his too frequent sermon preparation on Saturday nights.[1] In the opinion of many church historians many so-called Moderates could not be distinguished from those named Evangelicals as pastors apart from the dividing point of patronage. Hugh Watt ventured to say that "there were shades of Moderatism and shades of Evangelicalism, and while the irrevocably committed were known and had acquired certain distinctive characteristics, a very large proportion were of an indeterminate shade."[2] John Macinnes concurred in this estimate. From his study of the character

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evil not a little, and accelerates the degradation of the clergy." Alexander Carlyle, Autobiography, ed. John Hill Burton (Edinburgh: T. N. Foulis, 1910), p. 555. Carlyle himself raised questions in the minds of the people of Inveresk by his "levity" and social life. pp. 216-17.

[1]George Ridpath, Diary, ed. James Balfour Paul (Edinburgh: at the University Press, 1922). On Ridpath's supplying Boston's pulpit vide the Simprin Kirk Session Minutes, 1699-1714, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 346, I, 284.

[2]Watt, Thomas Chalmers . . . , p. 6.

and outlook of many Highland ministers he saw that

> there was a point where the good Moderates shaded off into the moderate Evangelical. These non-party men, susceptible to the spirit of the age while sensitive to the Evangelical tradition, represented, it is probable, the mass of the decent Church laity more faithfully than extremists of either party. . . . They were men of learning, character, and ministerial diligence.[1]

It would be wrong to charge all Moderates with negligence in pastoral work, but it seems that those who took advantage of presentations by neglecting parish work were on the whole predisposed to the Moderate view that patronage be upheld. The fears of Willison that abuse of patronage would allow men motivated by selfish interests into the churches of the land were not unfounded according to statements such as that made by Alexander Carlyle. As men whose first love was literature or farming began to dominate pastorates of the Church, inspiration

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[1]Macinnes, The Evangelical Movement . . . , p. 114. Sir Walter Scott described this kind of minister in his sketch of the fictitious Rev. Morton of Cairnvreckan in Waverley. "This worthy man . . . maintained his character with the common people, although he preached the practical fruits of Christian faith as well as its abstract tenets, and was respected by the higher orders, notwithstanding he declined soothing their speculative errors by converting the pulpit of the gospel into a school of heathen morality. . . . I have never to this day been able to discover which he belonged to, the Evangelical or the Moderate party in the Kirk. Nor do I hold the circumstance of much moment, since in my own remembrance, the one was headed by an Erskine, and the other by a Robertson." John Erskine and William Robertson, leaders of the two parties, respectively, were associate ministers of the Grayfriars Kirk which Scott attended. Sir Walter Scott, Waverley (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1889), p. 218.

for parish work often came only when secession churches were formed.[1] This did not always awaken the minister to his responsibilities because the patron rather than the parishioners supplied the stipend. The abuse of patronage against which Willison warned led to a decline in pastoral care in the Church of Scotland.[2] John Erskine and some other Evangelicals were largely responsible for keeping Reformed concepts of the ministry alive. By their service and their sermons they reminded young

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[1]After reporting the rejection of the Schism Overture of 1766 by the General Assembly, Thomas Somerville wrote, "I have no doubt of its being found, upon inquiry, that the ministerial duties of preaching, examination, visiting the sick, etc., are generally performed with more exemplary diligence and regularity in parishes where the dissenting interest has got going, and the parishioners enjoy the opportunity of choosing between the Church and the Secession." Somerville, My Own Life and Times, p. 87. By 1766 there were 120 secession churches with some 100,000 members. Ibid., p. 80.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 908. On the abuse of Patronage cf. Willison's charge in the Synod of Angus and Mearns that harm was being done to the Church by allowing patrons to put into parishes ministers whom people did not want. Records of the Synod of Angus and Mearns, 1736-50, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 12, Vol. VII, pp. 93-94. Abuse of patronage was primarily the presentation of a minister because his views corresponded to those of the patron but without concern for the minister's attitude toward serving the parishioners. This made it possible for ministers with selfish motives to court the favor of a patron, accept a presentation, and then disregard pastoral work apart from preaching on Sundays. Vide Peter Hume Brown, History of Scotland, III (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1911), p. 294. J. H. S. Burleigh, A Church History of Scotland (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 302-303.

clergymen at the end of the century of their obligation to God to seek the welfare of the souls under their care.

The Qualifications of the Pastor

Qualified men were desired and needed to meet the challenge of the ministry in Scotland. With the coming of the Reformation Church leaders established high ideals for ministers based on biblical precedents and provided for the examination of divinity graduates in order to weed out unworthy candidates. The First Book of Discipline, which owed much to John Knox, set forth the principle that prospective ministers were to be tested publicly in their knowledge of theology, especially in points at issue with Roman Catholics, Anabaptists, and Arians; and were to preach a trial sermon by which their ability in that essential area could be judged acceptable or not.[1] According to the authors of this document it was better to have no minister at all than to have an unworthy one incapable of ministering God's Word.[2] Echoing the belief of the Reformation leaders that no minister

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[1]The First Book of Discipline, Dunlop, (ed.), A Collection . . . , pp. 525-26.

[2]Ibid., p. 530.

is better than having a bad minister John Erskine in 1750 declared,

> It is better to hazard this inconvenience [of an insufficient number of ministers for all our churches], than to break an express law of Christ, which, if less strict in ordaining, we certainly do. . . . A small number of able and faithful pastors, is more to be desired than a multitude of raw, ignorant, illiterate novices, incapable either to explain or to defend the religion of Jesus; or of polite apostates from the gospel to philosophy, who think their time more usefully and agreeably spent in studying books of science than in studying their bibles; or of mercenary hirelings.[1]

Other men who preceded Erskine in the ministry agreed with this reasoning by their actions in the General Assembly. By the eighteenth century the basic test proposed in 1560 was expanded into a comprehensive examination in which presbyteries tried to ascertain the suitability of each candidate in spiritual maturity, moral integrity, intellectual capacity, and ability to communicate the message of the gospel. Through acts passed in 1694, 1696, 1704, 1711, 1714, and 1727 General Assemblies refined regulations concerning trials which men had to pass in order to be licensed as probationers.[2] In addition to screening

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[1]Erskine, Discourses, I, 44.

[2]This licensing limited a probationer to preaching only within his presbytery's bounds or by its direction and was the necessary step before a man became eligible to receive a call from a congregation and to be ordained. The Principal Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1694, Act 10 (Edinburgh: George Mosman, 1694). The directions contained in the various acts mentioned above underlie the examinations administered to candidates for the ministry by presbyteries in

potential pastors presbyteries were supposed to discipline ministers who proved to be irresponsible in their work or conducted themselves in a manner unworthy of their office.[1] Church courts also acted to protect the good repute of the Church's ministry at privy censures and through investigations of charges of scandalous conduct brought against clergymen. Thus, an attempt was made in the Church of Scotland to uphold the Reformed standard of a trained and worthy ministry.

Those responsible, however, for maintaining the standards of admission to the pastoral office sometimes faltered. Lack of

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Scotland today. Cf. Practice and Procedure in the Church of Scotland, ed. James T. Cox (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons Ltd., 1935).

[1]The Act of 1638 referred to above on page 17 stipulated that when presbyteries visited parishes they were to try the minister with respect to "the soundness of [his] judgement in matters of religion, [his] abilitie, for discharge of [his] calling, and the honesty of [his] conversation [i.e., conduct]." The Principall Acts of the Solemne Generall Assembly . . . , 1638, p. 32. The "Large Overtures" of 1705 reminded presbyteries that they were supposed to investigate the conduct of ministers to see that they maintained "a gospel walk and conversation before the people." Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1638-1842, pp. 337-38, 358-61. Though this part of the "Large Overtures" was not enacted as a part of the Form of Process in 1707, it was considered useful and in 1707, 1710, and 1718 was recommended for the consideration of Church judicatories to supply what was lacking in the Form of Process so as to give the Church "a complete system of rules in their proceedings in matters of discipline." The Principal Acts . . . , 1707, Act XVII (Edinburgh: George Mossman, 1707). Cf. The Principal Acts . . . , 1710, 1718. Vide supra, footnote 2, p. 19.

concern about reviewing regulations for licensing examinations was evident in the long delay of an overture concerning that subject. This overture, which was first submitted to the General Assembly in 1742, contained an organized collection of former acts on the licensing of probationers. It was presented to renew those acts and to remind presbyteries of the directions they were to follow. Yet, forty years elapsed before enough presbyteries showed the interest which warranted General Assembly's passing it as an act![1] Rules about trials if not forgotten were not always applied. Such failure was indicated by the General Assembly's action in 1754 of enjoining all presbyteries to observe the rules of the Word of God and the Acts of Assembly in licensing probationers. Since the overture of 1742 was not making much headway, this resolution served as a second-best reminder to use care and caution in licensing candidates for the Holy Ministry.[2] In 1744 John Willison lauded Church laws

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[1] The Principal Acts . . . , 1742, Act 6, pp. 8-13; 1782. From 1742 to 1747 this overture was yearly given the force of an act while the Assembly awaited reports from presbyteries in accordance with the regulations of the Barrier Act of 1697. Between 1756 and 1779 the overture was dropped, a majority of presbyteries in Scotland having failed to take even enough interest in it to send an opinion in to the Assembly either for or against it as the Barrier Act required. Finally the overture was revived. By 1782 a majority of presbyteries had submitted their opinions, a plurality favouring it, and the Assembly passed the overture into law by a large majority. The Principal Acts . . . , 1742-1747, 1782.

[2] The Principal Acts . . . , 1754.

pertaining to the licensing of preachers, but he intimated that some points relating to the religious commitment of candidates were being bypassed.[1] Yet, in spite of the indifference of some ministers convictions about an able and godly ministry, which were derived from theologians of the preceding centuries and established in the standards of the Church of Scotland, were kept alive.

The prerequisite of the ministry which was assumed to be sine qua non by men in the Reformed tradition was personal commitment to Jesus Christ. By Acts of the General Assembly the Church was officially committed to the biblical and Reformed position that not only profession of faith, but visible evidence of that faith was necessary among her ministers. The General Assembly of 1696 enacted that candidates for licensing bring from their universities testimonials of good behaviour; of sufficient learning; of piety, i.e. no worldly mindedness; of gravity, i.e. no pride; of prudence, i.e. no vanity; and of a

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[1] "These first assemblies [after the Revolution], and severals since, have made strict laws with respect to licensing preachers, not only about their learning, orthodoxy, and prudence; but have appointed presbyteries 'to make narrow inquiry into their moral character and piety, and what sense and impressions they have of religion upon their own souls; and they declare that such as are esteemed to be vain, imprudent, proud or worldly minded, by the generality of sober intelligent persons who converse with them, shall be kept back from that sacred work.' Happy were it for the church, if these excellent rules were strictly observed by all the presbyteries of this church." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 897.

sober disposition.[1] In 1704 that court decided that before a committee of presbytery a candidate would have to state reasons for his faith, express his beliefs, and answer some principal objections to the Christian faith.[2] Further acts in 1711 and 1742 concerning the entire conduct of licensing examinations re-emphasized the importance of asking each student to express verbally the "sense and impressions he [had] of religion on his own soul."[3] Wholehearted support of these procedures came from Boston, Willison and Erskine. When expressing his attitudes about the ministry, Boston took for granted that one who taught others the meaning of Christianity must be a genuine Christian himself.[4] A year after Boston's death in 1732 Willison alerted his synod to what he considered was a drift away from former standards of admitting ministers into the Church. He called

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[1]The Principal Acts . . . , 1696, Act 22.

[2]Ibid., 1704, Act 10.

[3]Ibid., 1711, Act 10, p. 15; 1742, Act 6, p. 10. The Overture and Act of 1742 had the effect of an act while it was renewed yearly until 1746. It was annually renewed as an overture until 1755 and then was dropped for many years. In 1782 a revised form finally became an established act of the church.

[4]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , V, 14. Cf. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 833. "One of the most essentially necessary . . . qualifications of a good minister is . . . that he have a firm belief of that gospel he is called to preach." Witherspoon, Works, V, 128.

on ordained men to assume their responsibility of appointing their successors in terms of Paul's directions in 1 Timothy 5:22 and 2 Timothy 2:2.

> Let us take care whom we license and ordain, that they be men of piety, prudence, and parts, men that will exert themselves for the glory of God, and for winning of the souls of the rising generation, that we may have ground to hope that religion will be entailed to succeeding ages.[1]

Unless one possessed spiritual life himself, he could not be expected to instruct others about that life nor to desire more to advance the kingdom of God than to serve his own ends. John Erskine also cautioned other pastors about separating men to the ministry by saying, "Let us beware of introducing any into the sacred office, but such as we have good evidence are qualified for it, by being visibly, and in the judgment of charity, sincere Christians."[2] Like Willison and other men concerned about "experimental" religion, in the sense of experiencing or applying the Christian faith in their lives, Erskine regarded this point of eligibility as the first to be kept in mind by ministers examining candidates and by the candidates themselves.

Members of Church courts made generalizations about the marks of the godly life for which they looked in probationers

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 838.

[2]Erskine, Discourses, I, 40.

and pastors. Some thought of godliness primarily in terms of the exercise of personal faith through such devotional exercises as prayer, Bible study and self-examination. This group included Thomas Boston, who defined godliness as "a conformity to God in the whole man," not limiting it to the devotional life.[1] Willison and Erskine, while believing a devotional life essential for pastors, stressed conduct which could be more easily observed and evaluated as indicative of spiritual qualification for the pastorate. Willison quoted Paul's charge to Timothy to be "an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" as a guide for all pastors.[2] One who wanted to become a preacher had to be able to preach to people by his life as well as by his lips. Through practicing what he professed to believe, he demonstrated the sincerity of his convictions.[3] The meaning of such practice was described by Erskine when he discussed the necessity of an exemplary life in the clergy.

> Might we not hope, that so lovely a conduct would engage others to be followers of them, even as they are of Christ?--Exemplary holiness, meekness and gentleness,

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , IV, 72. Cf. Baine, The Pastoral Office . . . , pp. 16-17.

[2]1 Tim. 4:12.

[3]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 841.

> forbearance and patience, candour and moderation, modesty and humility, love to God, to Christ, and to virtue, and a behavior corresponding to these graces, must needs adorn the teacher's profession, add efficacy to his instructions, . . . and transform even envy itself into admiration of so amiable a character, and a generous desire to copy after it.[1]

Erskine believed that the exercise of personal faith was the source of true Christian behaviour. Therefore, personal religion was a "necessary qualification in the Christian teacher." It would make a man disposed to pray and meditate on the Scriptures and it would promote "a pious and exemplary behaviour." Since a hypocrite could not continue successfully to imitate true Christian graces, conduct could be made a test of Christian character.[2] These pastors were convinced that there was a vital link between the application of Christian principles in a holy life and one's personal communion with God. The combination of these essential characteristics was cogently summarized by John Smith.

> The qualifications requisite for the office of a pastor demand that a minister of the Gospel be prudent and circumspect in all his conduct, have knowledge of himself, be

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[1]Erskine, Discourses, I, 16-17.

[2]Erskine, Discourses, I, 2-18; Cf. I, 64-65. Cf. "A minister's being qualified in [internal piety] . . . is what alone will enable him to give a suitable example to the world." William Craig, The Character and Obligations of a Minister of the Gospel (Glasgow: R. and A. Foulis, 1764), p. 12.

> qualified to teach others, be pious, be a man of prayer, exercise self-denial, be heavenly minded rather than concerned with worldly goods, live a holy and exemplary life while being meek and lowly in mind.[1]

A position on the surface similar to that of Willison, Erskine and Smith but which did not completely correspond with it was held by a number of Moderates. In essence this view deemed a "good life" to be a sufficient measure of a man's religion. Among the ministers who took this position Alexander Gerard outlined a comprehensive standard of moral excellence which he felt ministers should meet because their setting an example was "absolutely necessary for rendering all the other means that can be used, effectual" in their basic task of commending goodness to the love and practice of men.[2] The first part of Gerard's pattern of good works was abstinence from such adiaphorous matters as amusements that would offend Christians with tender consciences and avoidance of all vices. His list of virtues to be practiced included temperance, moderation, truth,

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[1]Smith, Lectures . . . , pp. 4-5.

[2]Gerard, The Pastoral Care, pp. 101-102, 105. "Steady and universal virtue, as far as it can be attained by human nature, is a qualification absolutely necessary for the exercise of his [the pastor's] office." Alexander Gerard, Sermons (London: Charles Dilly, 1782), II, 353. Vide II, 354. Other Moderates also pointed out the influence a pastor's example had in his ministry. Vide William Leechman, Sermons (London: A. Strahan, 1789), I, 105-107; Hill, Theological Institutes, p. 400.

justice, decency, benevolence, humility, zeal, and piety. By piety he meant love, reverence, gratitude, resignation, trust, and fear of God leading to the fervent and constant exercise of devotion. However, Gerard's concept of piety was more reserved than that which Boston, Willison and Erskine conveyed in statements about devotion to God. Gerard shunned emotional aspects of religion fearing superstition and "enthusiasm," a word with overtones of religions extremism and emotionalism.[1] Yet he did not completely divorce the virtues he advocated from devotional religion as some men did. Some Moderates based their case for virtuous living almost entirely on logical arguments relating to self interest. They made little or no attempt to link conduct with commitment to God. For example, Professor George Campbell named meekness, humility, fortitude, and temperance as the virtues required in the life of the pastor. But he did not place them in a peculiarly Christian context apart from referring to Jesus as the best pattern of those virtues. What he said about these aspects of good character could be described as good ethics, but would not have satisfied

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[1]Ministers' "piety must be alike remote from superstition and from enthusiasm; their integrity, though inflexible, must be free from severity; their humility, from meanness; their gravity, from moroseness; their cheerfulness, from levity; their zeal, from bitterness." Gerard, The Pastoral Care, pp. 101-113, 410-16.

Willison and Erskine as a sufficient test of godliness.[1] Good moral philosophy was not enough. Evangelicals were not the only ones who found something lacking in such preaching about virtue. When David Hume heard one of Alexander Carlyle's sermons on the virtues men ought to practise, Hume described it as nothing more than "heathen morality."[2] The point of disagreement between men of Erskine's persuasion and those with Campbell's attitude was the question of what constituted distinctively Christian character. Erskine's position was more true to the reasoning of Reformed theologians. Yet, in the practical application of these divergent views there was agreement that qualifications for the ministry should be judged in a large measure on the basis of candidates' moral conduct.

Ministers assessed the moral qualifications of a man preparing for the ministry first from the testimony of his

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[1]George Campbell, Works (London: Thomas Tegg, 1840), VI, 261-67. Although Campbell's lectures were not published until 1840 they were altered very little from the time he first delivered them in 1772. Ibid., p. 3. When Campbell's lectures were published a reviewer, who spoke in the spirit of eighteenth century Evangelicals, critized him for saying very little about the personal religion necessary for the formation of Christian character. Review of Lectures on the Pastoral Character by George Campbell, The Edinburgh Christian Instructor, VIII (1840), 51-64. Cf. David Lamont's teachings about virtues and against vices in which the primary motive for living a good life is "the voice of reason." David Lamont, Sermons on the Most Prevalent Vices (London: Stanley Crowder, 1780), esp. pp. 353-55.

[2]Carlyle, Autobiography, p. 276.

supervisors. Just as when the First Book of Discipline was the accepted guide, a graduate of divinity was required to bring to his presbytery letters of reference from his university professor and from the minister of the parish in which he lived while pursuing higher education. Those letters were supposed to include statements about the student's moral and Christian character, and the likelihood of his being useful and edifying in the work of the ministry.[1] Then a proposal to accept the young man for private trials was tabled until the next regular meeting of presbytery so that further inquiry could be made concerning his qualifications and behaviour. Besides securing information within its geographical bounds, the presbytery notified other presbyteries within the same synod three months in advance of the next meeting of synod that it intended to admit a candidate to public trials. At synod any objections were to be considered before the presbytery was authorised to complete its examinations.[2] Finally, prior to ordaining or installing any minister, a presbytery served an edict notifying church members to voice any objections they had to the man's

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[1]Cf. First Book of Discipline, Dunlop, (ed.), A Collection . . . II, pp. 526-27.

[2]This procedure was ordered by the General Assembly. Vide The Principal Acts . . . , 1711, Act 10, pp. 14-16; 1727, Act 12, pp. 28-29. Cf. 1742, Act 6, p. 10.

admission as a pastor.[1] These checks, on which much of present form and process is based, were designed to keep men of questionable character from occupying positions of leadership in the Church of Scotland. If a minister proved to be unworthy of his position, Church courts had the authority to discipline him. In the case in which James Arbuthnott was deposed in 1713 for scandalous conduct, the Synod of Angus and Mearns summarized the requirements of the ministry which he had violated and outlined what it believed to be involved in the godly life demanded of pastors.

> All Christians, especially ministers of the gospel, should have a conversation becoming the gospel, and flee youthful lusts, filthinesse and foolish talking, and that they should be so far from partaking of other men's sines, that they should reprove them, as the Scriptures require, and acts of Assembly founded thereupon. . . . Gravity, sincerity, and gentlenesse unto those that are to be taught, are the great qualifications appointed by Christ for ministers in their instructing the people. . . . Modesty and chaste conversation are always the dutie of ministers in a special manner. It is in a special manner the dutie of ministers to be peacemakers, and to live in peace with their people. . . . Foolish talking and jesting be inconvenient, and especially jesting and playing upon the Scriptures be most impious, contrarie to that respect which ministers and people ought to shew unto the word of God, and tending to promote irreligion and atheism instead of godlynesse and the power thereof.[2]

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[1]Acts of the General Assembly . . . , pp. 352-53.

[2]Records of the Synod of Angus and Mearns, 1711-15, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 12, Vol. III, pp. 140, 143-44.

On the whole Church courts were consistent in demanding a high ethical standard of Scottish ministers. They judged suitability for spiritual leadership on the basis of moral qualifications known publicly without attempting to evaluate aspects of a man's private worship. The goal of this watchfulness over both ordained men and those who aspired to be pastors was a worthy ministry whose spiritual instruction would be strengthened and would be in no way devitalized by the way in which preachers lived.

Next to devotion to God expressed in a godly life, the Church of Scotland required that her ministers be intellectually qualified for their role. Leaders of the Reformation in Scotland firmly implanted that principle in the Church. The First Book of Discipline called for the testing of candidates' knowledge and ability to teach faithfully the Word of God.[1] John Knox envisioned a school in every parish as the base of a system that would provide an educated ministry, and Andrew Melville measureably improved the courses of training offered to divinity students at Glasgow and St. Andrews universities.[2] Knox's vision continued to be the goal toward which the Church

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[1]First Book of Discipline, Dunlop, (ed.), A Collection . . . , pp. 525-26. Vide supra, p. 36.

[2]Thomas M'Crie, Life of Andrew Melville (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1824), I, 69-70; II, 363.

contributed its efforts in the eighteenth century.[1] Established Churchmen committed themselves consistently to the idea of a well rounded education for ministers. When a sect outside the Church of Scotland claimed that any knowledge but that of the Bible was necessary for ministers of the gospel, John Willison answered the challenge by asking how illiterate men could have translated the Bible, could defend sound doctrine against false teachers, and could use Scripture and other useful knowledge for the greatest benefit of the people. He insisted that knowledge of the arts, sciences, and languages was "a good hand-maid to divinity." Such education would prevent the reproach that an ignorant ministry would bring to the Church.[2] In a similar way John Erskine defended the contention that pastors needed an education against the idea that a good and honest heart was sufficient preparation. After quoting the

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[1]Surveying the Church's contribution to education in the eighteenth century Archibald Main noted that "the minister was the unit upon whom the educational structure mainly stood or fell" since initiative for educational advances came primarily and often only from the Church, which wanted a trained ministry. Archibald Main, "The Church and Education in the Eighteenth Century," Records of the Scottish Church History Society, III (1929), 192.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 834.

Bible and comparing the pastor's need of training to that of a physician or judge he declared,

> Uncommon talents are necessary to explain obscure passages of Scripture, to resolve intricate cases of conscience, and to defend the truth against gainsayers. . . . Nor will a small measure of skill and ability qualify any man, to teach the necessary doctrines and duties of religion, to convince the understanding, to interest the affections, to dart irresistible light into the conscience, and fix it there, to meet with men's objections and prejudices against religion, to unfold the tentations of Satan, and deceits of the heart, and to do all this in a manner becoming the dignity of the pulpit, and yet plain to the dullest capacity. . . . The best natural powers will need to be well cultivated by a liberal education.[1]

Though God called him to the work of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, the pastor could not expect to communicate his message effectively if he did not develop his mental talents. The importance of reaching men's hearts through their minds thus determined the need for learning. With the desire that men be equipped to fulfil their commission Scottish pastors of the eighteenth century extended the Reformed Church's demand for a trained ministry.

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[1]Erskine, Discourses, I, 23-24. Moderate leaders also were outspoken on the subject of education for the ministry. Alexander Carlyle argued that an education was necessary because it strengthened character through yielding a "conscious superiority of wisdom and virtue" which enabled a minister to maintain his dignity. Moreover it prepared him to understand men, to teach, to counsel, to preach, and to engage the attention of the upper class. Alexander Carlyle, The Usefulness and Necessity of a Liberal Education for Clergymen (Edinburgh: William Creech, 1793), pp. 17-28.

From the beginning of the century the General Assembly reiterated regulations for the education and examination of ministerial candidates. The foundations for licensing and ordination trials were laid in the First Book of Discipline and were strengthened by the Westminster Standards.[1] On those foundations General Assemblies built early in the eighteenth century. As a result, to become eligible for licensing trials students other than those who spoke the "Irish" language, i.e. Gaelic, had to earn the usual school degrees, and had to have at least six years study of divinity and languages during their university training.[2] The examination began with questions asked in private by a small committee of presbytery, which then reported whether or not each candidate was sufficiently qualified to take public trials. This committee examined each student

> in the Latin, Greek and Hebrew languages; in the study of philosophy, and his knowledge in divinity, theoretical, polemical and practical, especially such points as shall be matter of present debates and controversies; his

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[1]Dunlop, (ed.), A Collection . . . , pp. 525-26; The Confession of Faith, pp. 534-35.

[2]The Principal Acts . . . , 1704, Act 10; 1711, Act 11, pp. 14-15; 1742, Act 6, pp. 8-13. Regulations for men who spoke Gaelic were lenient because there was an acute shortage of ministers in the Highlands. In 1782 the Act and Overture of 1742 concerning the licensing of probationers was passed with the alteration that candidates must have gone through a full course of philosophy at the college and have studied divinity for four years. Acts of the General Assembly . . . , p. 812.

> acquaintance with the holy Scriptures, and what impression he has of religion on his own soul; his knowledge of the constitution of the primitive Christian Church, and also of our own, and of the government and discipline thereof; and of his spiritual wisdom to deal with the several sorts of persons he may have to do with, namely, atheists, despisers of religion, careless and secure persons, weak and tender consciences, and others, wherein the great difficulty of the pastoral charge lyes; and particularly anent his ends and intentions in entering upon the preaching of the gospel.[1]

During his trials in front of the entire presbytery the candidate was tested again in the same areas. He presented a paper in Latin on a controverted doctrine named by presbytery. At a subsequent meeting he had to sustain the orthodox thesis of that paper in a debate with some member of the examining body. The public examinations included a test on Church history, the translating of passages from the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament, and an oral interrogation on the floor of presbytery. The extemporaneous questions could come from any presbyter and could be in any area covered by the previous examinations.[2] A random sampling of presbytery minutes of

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[1] The Principal Acts . . . , 1742, Act 6, p. 10. This act combined the dictates of previous Assemblies in Session 23 of 1638, Act 22 of 1696, Act 10 of 1704, and Act 10 of 1711.

[2] The Principal Acts . . . , 1742, Act 6, pp. 8-13; Acts of the General Assembly . . . , pp. 349, 366. Individual parts of a man's examination were assigned to him for several meetings of presbytery so that he appeared over a course of several months. The final, oral examination usually lasted from one-half to three-quarters of an hour according to Alexander Carlyle, though in some cases it was much longer and perhaps the most gruelling part of a candidate's test. Carlyle, Autobiography, p. 246.

eighteenth century proceedings suggests that presbyteries were generally faithful in testing students' intellectual preparation for the pastorate. However, some young men may have been asked a larger number or more difficult questions than others, since the thoroughness of an examination was not indicated merely by the statements that the prescribed tests were given.[1] The above specific rules which were established in the eighteenth century constituted the framework of tests given for more than one hundred years in which the Church of Scotland maintained a high academic standard for its leaders.[2]

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[1]For example, every volume of the Edinburgh Presbytery Minutes for the century contains records of licensing and ordination trials in which the above subjects and tests were covered. The Minutes of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 121, Vols. IV-XX. Cf. The Minutes of the Presbytery of Dundee, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 103, Vols. III-XV. The Minutes of the Presbytery of Selkirk, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 327, Vols. II-VIII.

[2]The Large Overture of 1705, Act 10 passed by the General Assembly of 1711, and Act 8 passed in 1782 were the guides for licensing and ordination examinations. Acts of the General Assembly . . . , pp. 358-61; The Principal Acts . . . , 1711, Act 10, pp. 14-17; 1782, Act 8, pp. 28-32. The mark of these tests can be seen in the examinations presbyteries administer today. Vide Cox, (ed.), Practice and Procedure in the Church of Scotland . . . . Commendation of Church of Scotland moral and academic standards came from Dr. Samuel Johnson who said, "I saw not one in the islands, whom I had reason to think either deficient in learning, or irregular in life; but found several with whom I could not converse without wishing, as my respect increased, that they had not been presbyterians." Samuel Johnson, A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland (Glasgow: The Stanhope Press, 1817), pp. 160-61.

On the basis of the official demands of the Church and in keeping with the Reformed tradition experienced ministers recommended an inclusive program of study for theological students. Although Boston did not write on this subject, his hesitancy to undergo licensing trials until he felt prepared and his later mastery of Hebrew indicated his approval of academic discipline for pastors.[1] In his concern for improvement of the ministry John Willison challenged,

> Let young preachers and expectants . . . diligently improve their excellent opportunities in furnishing themselves with the knowledge of the languages, history, philosophy, mathematics, geography, astronomy, and polemic divinity, which are good handmaids to scripture knowledge: and this would be one way to promote the welfare of this church, and prevent her reproach.[2]

By the time Erskine added his views on the education of the clergy Scotland was well on the way to becoming a world leader in education and academic accomplishments. Along with those influenced by Moderatism he encouraged students to get a well rounded education, but his primary reasons were those of Willison's rather than those of advancing the cause of the literary arts. He felt that

> without an ability to read the scripture in the languages in which it was originally written, and some acquaintance with natural and moral philosophy, history, antiquity, the

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[1]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 25, 27-28, 249.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 834.

> best Greek and Roman authors, and the arts of logic, rhetoric, and criticism, . . . a minister can scarcely fail to be despised; and a despised ministry is seldom successful.[1]

More important than acquiring respect, however, was the benefit of gaining aids to understand Scripture and to answer questions and objections about religion. So, a student preparing for the ministry also needed to gain a clear understanding of orthodox theology and to become well versed in Scripture. Then he would be able "to declare the whole counsel of God, and to teach men to observe all things whatsoever Jesus has commanded."[2] As these men understood the intellectual demands of the pastorate, the pastor's responsibility to proclaim the Christian faith with all its ramifications caused him to draw not only on subjects of divinity he had studied but also on other academic disciplines which enabled him to understand and to communicate

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[1]Erskine, Discourses, I, 24.

[2]By orthodox theology Erskine meant that a minister "must understand well the doctrine of man's primitive apostasy from God, with its unhappy effects on the whole human race; the method of recovery through Christ; the work of the Spirit in applying a purchased redemption; the full and free offers of Christ, and of salvation through him, made in the gospel, to the very chief of sinners; the nature of that faith which unites to Christ, of that holiness which makes men meet for the inheritance of saints in light, and which is indeed heaven begun in the soul; and of those various good works of piety, or of charity, by which we are bound to glorify God, to serve him in our generation, and to prove, to ourselves and others, the truth and energy of our faith." Erskine, Discourses, I, 25-26.

with people.[1] They looked for men who had mastered their course in theology and who had an adequate knowledge of other fields covered in university training because such men would be prepared to expound Biblical doctrine correctly, to teach people clearly how to live as Christians, to answer cogently arguments against or distortions of fundamental points of belief, and to listen sympathetically to the problems of individuals needing counsel.

Ability to communicate the tenets of the Christian faith was another biblical requirement for ministers on which emphasis was placed from the time of the Reformation when the preaching of the Word was given an elevated place in pastoral care. The First Book of Discipline called for the testing of each candidate's ability to preach by means of a trial sermon and insisted,

> We cannot judge him a Dispensator of God's Mysteries, that in no wise can breake the Bread of Life to the fainting and hungrie Soules; neither judge we that the Sacraments can be rightlie ministred by him, in whose Mouth God hath put no Sermon of Exhortation.[2]

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[1]To the subjects named above some Moderate leaders added knowledge of the world, or instruction in the etiquette and customs of high society as part of the minister's essential education. Carlyle, . . . Education for Clergymen, pp. 6-12; Gerard, The Pastoral Care, pp. 407-409.

[2]Dunlop, (ed.), A Collection . . . , pp. 526, 530.

In the eighteenth century men who held preaching in the same high regard turned to the Scriptures as the source of their view as well as that of the First Book of Discipline. 1 Timothy 3:2 and 2 Timothy 2:2, which referred to the pastor's need to be apt to teach, supported Boston's statement that "some dexterity of communicating unto others" Christian doctrine was needed before one could assure himself of having received a call to the ministry.[1] The same New Testament teaching sparked John Erskine's more emphatic assertion that "it is criminal to lay hands on a candidate, if we have no positive ground to hope that he will preach usefully."[2] With this conviction in mind Erskine advised pastors to learn to understand the workings of the human mind and emotions. Then they could discern the best ways to adapt their teaching "to the different ages, natural dispositions, genius, temporal circumstances, temptations, errors, moral characters, and religious inclinations of their hearers."[3] The regulations for licensing trials which were framed in the early eighteenth century embodied the same concern Boston and Erskine expressed about the importance of preaching. The several types of discourses expected in the course of a pastor's pulpit

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , IV, 24.

[2]Erskine, Discourses, I, 43.

[3]Ibid., p. 31.

ministry played a prominent role in a candidate's public examination before presbytery. The guide for licensing students as probationers which was presented to the General Assembly in the Large Overtures of 1705 suggested five pulpit appearances during the trials.[1] Later measures reduced the number to four discourses and specified that sermons be based on texts of Scripture.[2] The first test of a man's preaching came in a homily on a text assigned by his examiners. Later the student presented an exercise and addition, a sermon divided into two parts. The first half was taken up with analyzing the meaning and with answering textual and critical questions. The second portion added to the exercise in that practical applications and doctrines illuminated by the text were mentioned, at least one of which doctrines was dealt with specifically.[3] A third assignment involved a lecture on a large portion of Scripture,

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[1]Overtures concerning the Discipline and Method of Proceeding in the Ecclesiastical Judicatories of the Church of Scotland, The Acts of the General Assembly, 1638-1842, p. 349.

[2]The Principal Acts . . . , 1742, Act 6, p. 11.

[3]"The half of the time allowed for this exercise is ordinarily to be taken up in the explicatory and analytic part of the Sermon, and in answering textual and critical questions and difficulties; the other half of the time allowed is to be taken up in raising of observations and doctrines from the text; one of which at least is to be methodically handled, the first whereof is called Exercise, and the other Addition." The Acts of General Assembly, 1638-1842, p. 366.

i.e. a kind of running exposition of a passage from the Bible.[1] Finally, the candidate preached what was known as the popular sermon which people of the parish as well as members of presbytery heard.[2] Through these examinations one intent on becoming a preacher demonstrated not only that he was qualified to represent Jesus Christ as a devoted disciple and to interpret and expound the Scriptures using his educational background, but that he could speak in a way intelligible to his hearers. Due to the influence of Reformed views of the ministry the preaching of the Word remained central in pastoral care.

The Pastor's Charge

To become a minister in accordance with Boston, Willison and Erskine's conception of the office one not only had to be called by God and to possess the qualifications to carry out the duties incumbent upon him by reason of his task, but he had to have a congregation to serve. The term minister signified

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[1]The following description of the type of sermon called a lecture appeared in a review of one of John Erskine's sermons. "We understand it to be Dr. Erskine's present practice, instead of the ordinary mode of lecturing by paraphrasing and explaining the sacred books, to select certain passages of Scripture, on which he dwells at considerable length." The Edinburgh Clerical Review, No. 2 (November 17, 1799), p. 57.

[2]In the case of ordination trials a probationer's popularity with parishioners was dependent to a large extent on the impressions he made in that message. The Principal Acts . . . , 1742, Act 6, p. 11. Carlyle, Autobiography, p. 245.

serving a group of people by means of spiritual leadership. A common description of the ministry was the biblical one of a leader of the "flock of God," a pastor of a congregation.[1] The office of the ministry was thereby equated with the pastoral care of souls in a particular charge. This unique emphasis on the pastoral charge began at the time of the Reformation in Scotland. Commenting on this fact J. H. S. Burleigh stated,

> Knox and his colleagues . . . laid a new and significant emphasis on the pastoral obligations implied in ordination, which had been scandalously neglected. Ordination became a solemn admission to the pastoral office in a particular charge which the ordained may not leave of his own pleasure, but only if the whole Kirk for good reasons shown decide to translate him to another.[2]

The First Book of Discipline implied that the office of the ministry was inseparably linked to the service of a parish in its stipulation that admission of men to the ministry consisted in "the consent of the people and church whereto they shall be appointed, and approbation of the learned ministers appointed for their examination.[3] In more specific terms the Second Book of Discipline stated that a minister must have a certain flock

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[1]Boston, Willison and Erskine all spoke of ministers as pastors given oversight of the Lord's flock. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , IV, 313; Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 838-840; Erskine, Discourses, I, 4.

[2]Burleigh, A Church History of Scotland, p. 168.

[3]This document also charged the minister to "attend upon the flock of Christ Jesus, over the which he is appointed pastor." Dunlop, (ed.), A Collection . . . , II, 528-29.

assigned to him. A man could be ordained to do nothing other than shepherd the people of God in one locality. A minister had to be a pastor in this sense if he was to be regarded as a minister at all. By definition "pastor" and "minister" were interchangeable. "Pastors, Bischops, or Ministers, ar they wha are appointit to particular congregationes, quhilk they rewll be the Word of God, and over the quhilk they watch."[1] The Form of Church Government produced by the Westminster Assembly half a century later linked ministers with local charges in much the same way. It stated, "It is agreeable to the Word, and very expedient, that such as are to be ordained Ministers, be designed to some particular Church, or other ministerial charge."[2] These standards set the precedent for the practice in the eighteenth century of postponing the ordination of a probationer until he had received and accepted the call of a parish.[3]

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[1]Dunlop, (ed.), A Collection . . . , II, 770-71. A few years before the adoption of this guide a committee of General Assembly reported that a bishop is essentially the pastor of one congregation, who may exercise supervision beyond his own congregation when that is delegated to him by a church authority in addition to his proper work. Acts and Proceedings of the General Assemblies of the Kirk of Scotland, or The Book of the Universall Kirk of Scotland, II (Edinburgh: Bannantyne Club, 1840), 64.

[2]The Confession of Faith, pp. 532-33.

[3]The Large Overtures of 1705 recommended this procedure which was followed for some time. The Acts of the General Assembly, 1638-1842, pp. 352-53.

A licensed candidate possessed only the authority to preach the gospel within the bounds of his presbytery or by its direction. He was recognized as a man awaiting a pastoral charge.[1] Near the end of the century when some presbyteries began to deviate from the above norm for ordination, the Synod of Angus and Mearns introduced an overture in General Assembly requesting that that body clearly enact that any ordination of a man with no relation to a ministerial charge be null and void.[2] This

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[1]"Probationers are not to be esteemed by themselves or others, to preach by vertue of any pastoral office, but only to make way for their being called to a pastoral charge." The Principal Acts . . . , 1694, Act 10, p. 11.

[2]"The Provincial Synod of Angus and Mearns, considering that it is contrary to the fundamental constitution of this Church to ordain any man to the office of a minister, without relation to a particular charge, and sufficient provision for the support of the ministerial character; and that a deviation from so essential an article of the constitution, has not only of late become frequent, but has been attended with pernicious consequences, humbly overture to the Venerable Assembly, that they would be pleased to take such measures as to them in their wisdom, shall seem best, to put a stop to this growing evil. -- And particularly, that for this end, it may be enacted that it shall not be in the power of any presbytery, to ordain any man to the office of a minister, without relation to a fixed charge, unless they shall first have obtained the consent of the General Assembly or its commission, to that effect: and that no such consent shall be given, till security for a sufficient provision, to support the ministerial character, in the person meant to be ordained: be laid before the presbytery, and the General Assembly, or the Commission thereof. And that all ordination conferred contrary to this regulation, shall be, ipso facto, null and void." Records of the Synod of Angus and Mearns, 1774-95, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 12, Vol. IX, p. 144.

overture drawn up October 26, 1784 was not passed by the General Assembly, but it did express the conviction held by men in the Reformed tradition such as Boston, Willison and Erskine that to be a minister a man had to exercise pastoral responsibility. The prevailing connection of ordination with the service of a specific church manifested the belief that the office of the minister was first and foremost a position of exercising pastoral care of souls.

In general during the two centuries following the Reformation the office of the ministry was viewed as a pastoral position distinct from even the related position of teacher. The designation of the pastorate and the exclusion of the professorship from the work to which a man was ordained resulted from ideas of church government formulated by John Calvin. Calvin classified four kinds of officers of the church: pastors, teachers, elders, and deacons. Only pastors were ordained to proclaim the Word of God, to administer the sacraments, and to exercise discipline. Teachers, who were also called doctors, were to instruct people in true doctrine and to train men for the ministry but were not regarded as ministers of the gospel.[1] The influence of Calvin's thought was evident in the distinction

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[1]John Calvin, Theological Treatises, translated and edited by J. K. S. Reid (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), pp. 58-62.

between pastors and doctors that prevailed in the Church of Scotland from the sixteenth until the eighteenth century. The First Book of Discipline briefly referred to the doctor as a "teacher of the catechisme, and rudiments of religione." It then pointed out that a doctor could not properly exercise the functions of the ministerial office although a pastor with the proper qualifications could be permitted to teach in a school.[1] It was with the Second Book of Discipline, however, that the Church of Scotland formally adopted Calvin's view of the doctor as a permanent office in the church along with those of pastor, of elder, and of deacon.[2] The idea that doctors and pastors occupied two different offices of the church was modified by the Westminster Form of Presbyterial Church Government adopted in 1645. It described the doctor as "a minister of the word, as well as the pastor" and as one who had "power of administration of the sacraments." By this was meant that the teacher was a minister who concentrated on expounding Scripture, teaching

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[1]"Bot to preache unto the peple, to minister the sacraments, and to celebrat marriagis, perteins not unto the Doctour, unles he be utherwayis ordourlie callit; howbeit the pasture [Pastor] may teache in the scoles, as he qwha hes also the gift of knawledge oftentymis meit thairfoir, as the examples of Policarpus and utheris testifie." The First Book of Discipline, Chapter 5, . . . The Booke of the Universall Kirk of Scotland, I, 544.

[2]. . . The Book of the Universall Kirk of Scotland, II, 491, 493, 497.

sound doctrine, and defending the truth of the gospel against those who disputed it. The office could arise out of a division of responsibilities according to the respective abilities of several ministers who served one congregation. In this case one man would devote his time to teaching the Word of God. The Form of Government went on to suggest, however, that the teacher or doctor rightly belonged in a school or university.[1] The implication of the statements made by the Westminster divines was that there were teaching and pastoral ministries rather than teaching and pastoral offices. The doctor was regarded as a pastor who discharged the duties of teaching, which were expected in the pastoral service of every congregation but which devolved upon him alone in a situation where a church had more than one minister. Yet, the position of the Second Book of Discipline that the primary place of service for doctors was in a school was adopted.

In spite of the implications of the Westminster Standards Scots continued to distinguish between the positions of pastor and of doctor with respect to ordination. Thomas Boston followed the reasoning of the Books of Discipline in his interpretation of

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[1]The Confession of Faith, pp. 517-18.

Ephesians 4:11-12, in which he found two different offices delineated.

> Though the particle some is not here added betwixt the pastors and teachers, yet they are distinct church officers. The pastor being gifted with a word of wisdom, by which, besides his ability in some measure to open the Scripture, he is fitted wisely and powerfully to apply the word for working on people's affections, and for advancing practical godliness. The teacher being gifted with a word of knowledge for opening up the Scripture, establishing truth, and confuting error.[1]

Whereas Boston thought of the pastor and teacher as two separate kinds of servants of God, John Erskine spoke of the pastors' teaching ministry and referred to ministers as teachers of Christianity. Yet, it was plain that Erskine regarded the ministerial office primarily in terms of pastoral service to a particular congregation. After the death of Dr. William Robertson, his colleague at New Grayfriars Church and the principal of Edinburgh University, Erskine distinguished between Robertson's ministerial work and his office as principal of the college.[2]

The principle applied in practice during most of the eighteenth century with respect to pastors and teachers was that

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[1]Boston appealed to 1 Corinthians 12:8 and Romans 12:7,8 to support his argument that these were two separate offices. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , IV, 313. Cf. Christ "has given the several office bearers in his house their distinct provinces; some to be employed one way, some another, though all for the good of the Church." Ibid., pp. 309-310.

[2]Erskine, Discourses, I, 1-10, 83-85, 273.

of the First Book of Discipline, which permitted qualified pastors to teach in schools but which forbade the ordaining of a man solely to become a professor. In fact the Church preferred that ministers be chosen to teach theology. The appointment in 1713 of Alexander Scrimgeour to the chair of Divinity and Biblical criticism in St. Mary's College brought an objection from the Presbytery of St. Andrews because he was a layman. The case continued in Church courts until Scrimgeour's death about eighteen years later.[1] Deviation from the norm of ordaining men to a charge with solely pastoral responsibilities came near the end of the century. One example of this departure from former practice was the case of Alexander Gerard. Gerard taught philosophy for about ten years at Marischal College, Aberdeen after being licensed as a probationer. He was ordained when given the professorship of divinity because the position entailed preaching in St. Nicholas Church as one of the city ministers. Although ordination was occasioned by Gerard's call to serve a church, he had no pastoral responsibilities other than preaching.[2] In effect Gerard was ordained because the

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[1]Hew Scott, Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae, VII (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1928), 429.

[2]G. D. Henderson, The Burning Bush (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1957), pp. 163-66; Scott, Fasti . . . , VII, 357-434. Gerard's lack of pastoral experience did not prevent him from lecturing on the pastor's duties and on methods of pastoral care, which lectures were published in his book The Pastoral Care.

Church wanted only ministers in chairs of theology. Yet, being a professor of theology was insufficient reason to be ordained. To become a minister one still had to be related to a congregation, if only by a formal tie of preaching on Sundays.

Connected with the question of the relation of the pastor to the professor in terms of the ministerial office was the problem of pluralities and non-residence. Because many pastors held teaching positions in the eighteenth century at the same time as they served pastorates, the very acceptance of professorships became a point of controversy. At the time of the Reformation absenteeism from one's parish, the holding of a plurality of spiritual benefices, and engaging in other occupations were proscribed for ministers. Both the First and Second Books of Discipline stated that once a minister had accepted a post he could not leave it unless he was transferred to another pastorate by the presbytery.[1] The business of pastoral duties was too important to be neglected because of competing interests or because a man had more than one charge to serve. All of a man's talents and attention were needed for the service of one parish. The only reason for a pastor's leaving his congregation even in the eighteenth century, Steuart of Pardovan pointed out, was his transference by an act of

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[1]Dunlop, (ed.), A Collection . . . , pp. 529, 770-71.

presbytery to serve another charge.[1] Non-residence, i. e. not living in the parish one served, was widely condemned by eighteenth century ministers in keeping with the above principles. Evangelicals like John Willison and John Erskine were joined by Moderate leaders like Alexander Gerard in demanding that ministers maintain a constant residence in their respective parishes so as to be at hand to serve at all times.[2] However, ministers were not nearly so agreed about the question of pluralities involving the service of both a pastorate and a professorship.

The basic point of contention regarding pluralities during the eighteenth century was the ability of a minister to carry out his pastoral duties if he filled another post along with the pastorate. At the beginning of the century the majority opinion opposed the linking of pastorates with professorships. Such division of labour was supported by the Edinburgh Town Council in 1720. Convinced that "the office of a Minister and Professor cannot be discharged in a suitable manner by one person at one and the same tyme" they enacted that no minister of the gospel

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[1]Walter Steuart of Pardovan, Collections and Observations Methodiz'd; Concerning the Worship, Discipline, and Government of the Church of Scotland (Edinburgh: Andrew Anderson, 1709), pp. 17, 24.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 677; Erskine, Discourses, I, 137; Gerard, The Pastoral Care, p. 229.

in the city should be elected Professor of Divinity of History unless he previously resigned his charge. This principle was applied in reverse to the calling of a professor from either of those departments to be a pastor in the city. The act continued in effect in the department of Church History until 1737, and in the chair of Divinity up to 1779.[1] Most of the pastors who accepted teaching positions in the Scottish Universities during the first half of the century resigned their pastorates rather than have two charges.[2] However, the feeling that a pastor could not adequately serve a parish while teaching future ministers began to wane along with the century. In 1732 when James Smith demitted his charge of West St. Giles to become Professor of Divinity at the University of Edinburgh, several of the elders and deacons asked Presbytery to allow him to

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[1]A similar act passed by the Town Council in 1709 was rescinded in 1713. Although the Act of 1720 applied to professors, principals of the school were expressly exempted from its restrictions. Alexander Morgan, (ed.), University of Edinburgh Charters, Statues, and Acts of the Town Council and Senatus, 1583-1858 (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1937), pp. 167-69, 171-72. For some unknown reason the Council's Act of 1709 was used in 1827 to determine the eligibility of men to fill the vacancy in the Divinity Chair. The Act of 1720 evidently had been forgotten by the end of the century, which indicates the lax views toward pluralities that became prevalent.

[2]Many ministers who went to teach at Edinburgh between 1700 and 1754, the majority who accepted positions at St. Andrews between 1700 and 1800, and all who became connected with the University of Glasgow throughout the century first severed their ties with local churches. Scott, Fasti . . . , I, 11, 46, 143; III, 83, 144, 207; VII, 357-434.

continue as their pastor because they saw "no inconsistency in the discharging of both offices."[1] By 1788 there were ministers in every university except Glasgow who adopted a similar view and who held additional livings in parishes.[2] Alexander Gerard taught that a minister should have no other occupation except limited agriculture if needed for self support, teaching, or practising medicine for the service of the community.[3] Some like Gerard accepted dual ministries on George Meldrum's condition that they be relieved of all preaching on Sundays.[4] Of the others few met equal demands from parishioners and

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[1]Scott, Fasti . . . , VII, 143.

[2]Besides the principals of St. Leonard's College, St. Andrews, who had also been ministers of St. Leonard's Parish from the time of the Reformation, Hew Scott listed eighteen other ministers whose holding of pluralities was encompassed by the eighteenth century. Some of the better known clergymen were William Carstares, William Robertson, Hugh Blair, Alexander Gerard, and George Hill. Scott, Fasti . . . , VII, 357-434.

[3]Gerard, The Pastoral Care, p. 232.

[4]Edinburgh Presbytery unanimously relieved Meldrum of visitation of families and preaching on week days. Alexander Grant, The Story of the University of Edinburgh During Its First Three Hundred Years (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1887) II, 283. Cf. Dictionary of National Biography, ed. Leslie Stephen, XXXVIII (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1894), 217. Alexander Gerard limited his pastoral service in order to devote himself to his university work. Henderson, The Burning Bush, p. 166. John Hill understood that Hugh Blair's duties in the University of Edinburgh and at St. Giles consisted almost entirely of lecturing and preaching. John Hill, An Account of the Life and Writings of Hugh Blair (Edinburgh: J. Ballantyne and Co., 1807), pp. 41, 134.

students effectively. William Robertson wished he could afford to give up his position as preacher in the Grayfriars Church so that he could devote all his time to the studies which engaged him as principal of Edinburgh University.[1] George Hill was about the only minister who won recognition as both a faithful pastor and a diligent professor.[2] Against the widespread acceptance of pluralities of pastorates and professorships in the latter part of the century a few spoke out. The Presbytery of Lochmaben unanimously found the holding of both offices to be incompatible when John Walker of Moffat was appointed Professor of Natural History at the University of Edinburgh in 1779. However, the Synod of Dumfries overruled this action and ordered the Presbytery to strike that statement from their minutes on the ground that their procedure was

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[1]William Robertson, Letter to Mr. Baron Mure, November 25, 1761, quoted by Dugald Stewart, Account of the Life and Writings of William Robertson (London: A. Strahan, 1801), p. 73.

[2]Hill was a professor at St. Andrews when he was ordained in order to serve the church his father had served. An Evangelical nineteenth century journalist agreed with Hill's biographer that he did all that could be expected of either a pastor or a professor in his respective roles, but added that this was an exception rather than the rule in such pluralities. George Cook, The Life of the Late George Hill (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable & Company, 1820), pp. 83, 85-87; The Edinburgh Christian Instructor, XXIV (1825), 545-46.

irregular.[1] Although this controversy was settled on a technical point, it is illustrative of some other attempts to limit pluralities. In similar following cases, according to Andrew Campbell, Evangelicals tended to oppose giving one man both a pastorate and a professorship together while Moderates often encouraged such pluralities. Campbell attributed Evangelical opposition in part to their belief that the work of a professor reduced the pastoral efficiency of a minister.[2] The belief that one minister should serve one charge fitted into the biblical and Reformed pattern of the ministry perpetuated by men whose understanding of the role of the minister was very much like that of Thomas Boston, John Willison and John Erskine.

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[1]Minutes of the Presbytery of Lochmaben, 1773-1781, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 247, Vol. IX, October 5, 1779. The Synod Book of Dumfries, 1770-1787, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 98, Vol. IV, pp. 140-41.

[2]Andrew J. Campbell, Two Centuries of the Church of Scotland, 1707-1929 (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, Ltd., 1930), p. 161. Cf. John Cunningham, The Church History of Scotland (Edinburgh: James Thin, 1882), II, 430.

CHAPTER II

THE PASTOR'S RELATION TO GOD

Introduction

To understand the conception of the pastor's role held by Thomas Boston, John Willison and John Erskine it is important to consider their thoughts about the pastor's relation to God. Like others in the biblical and Reformed tradition of the ministry they defined the pastor as a man whom God called to give spiritual leadership in the church in a position established by God. In one sense the standing of the minister before God was determined by his call to the ministry. However, he was not a man of God merely because of the position he filled. He was so because of his spiritual relation to God, which centred in his commitment to Jesus Christ and was expressed through a devotional life. They agreed with the traditional view of the Church that such a relation was a necessary qualification for giving spiritual instruction and counsel. In addition, the forms of the pastor's devotional life shaped his proclamation

of the faith and revealed the evidences of Christian commitment which he expected in church members.

Boston and Willison interpreted commitment in terms of a personal covenant with God, as Scottish covenanters did in the seventeenth century, but Erskine stressed the place of understanding and intellectual assent in faith. For the former two commitment led to an intensive effort to keep the obligations of their covenant, to check their standing with God, and to discern God's personal message to them in the Bible and in natural events. Erskine spoke of devotional aspects of faith in more general concepts. Yet, he showed an attitude toward prayer and Scripture similar to that held by Boston and Willison, which essentially was that advanced by Calvinists of the previous two centuries. These three men were concerned with the pastor's devotion to God as it influenced his proclamation of the gospel and his interpretation of the Christian life. More important, however, was their agreement with the Reformed concept that the effectiveness of his ministry depended on his disciplined exercise of piety. More than the practice of what was preached was needed to transform the lives of men. This change could be effected solely by the work of God's Holy Spirit. Since the minister shared in God's work, he could not give satisfactory spiritual service by relying on his own powers of persuasion or

moral example. To be a "man of God" a pastor had to acknowledge his dependence on God. Through communion with God, the application of God's grace in the process of spiritual maturation, and the invoking of God's blessing on his ministry the minister prepared himself to be used by God. Thus, a key to the pastoral ministry in the eighteenth century may be found in the nature and expression of the pastor's relationship to God.

The Pastor's Commitment

At the beginning of the eighteenth century interpretations of the nature of the pastor's commitment to God, which was regarded as an essential qualification of the ministry by ministers in general, were not far removed from prominent positions of seventeenth century Scots. Boston and Willison's understanding of Christian faith came out of the framework of federal theology which proposed covenants of works and of grace to describe God's dealings with man in history. According to this view God established a covenant with Adam as the representative federal head of mankind. The agreement contained God's promise of life based on the condition of perfect obedience. As a result of Adam's transgression while representing mankind, all men share in the breaking of the covenant of works, experience the consequences of guilt and depravity, and are

liable to God's judgment. In the eternal councils of the Almighty, however, God made a covenant of grace with Jesus Christ, who represented the persons whom God elected to deliver and to give eternal life. By his obedient life and sacrificial death Jesus secured the blessings of the covenant of grace for those who place true faith in Him, that faith being demonstrated by repentance and obedience to God's law. Boston and Willison taught that this covenant of grace became applicable to each individual who repented of his sin, accepted God in Christ as his Saviour, and dedicated himself to live wholeheartedly for God.

To enter into covenant with God involved more, however, than merely receiving the benefits of the covenant administered by Jesus Christ. It was important for a man in some formal manner to affirm his faith in Christ as the condition of receiving the blessings of the covenant, which affirmation included a pledge to obey God.[1] The notion of signing a written

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[1]The covenant of grace "is God's free and gracious paction with elect sinners in Christ, proposed to and made with them in the gospel: wherein, according to his eternal compact with Christ their surety, and for the sake of his mediation and merits, he graciously and immutably promiseth pardon, peace, grace, and glory to them. Particularly, he promiseth, in an absolute manner, to grant them the blessings of vocation, faith, regeneration, and other means of salvation. And in order to their obtaining of the pardon of sin, the adoption of children, and eternal life (all which blessings are purchased by Christ), he requires of them that they believe 'in his Son the Lord Jesus

form of acceptance of God's covenant was advanced in 1659 by William Guthrie in The Christian's Great Interest.[1] Guthrie equated the signing of a written covenant with the exercising of saving faith when the ritual was accompanied by sincere, inward belief and trust.[2] Others also adopted the practice of "personal covenanting" until by the end of the seventeenth century it was widespread.[3] From that generation Boston, Willison

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Christ,' and accept of him with all the benefits of this covenant, by a true and lively faith, which they are called to show forth by a sincere repentance, and study of new obedience. All which gracious promises and demands, the elect, in due time, upon God's call, cordially acquiesce in, accept of, and give consent unto: and this they do through the grace and strength of Christ their surety, according to his eternal engagement for them, Ezek. xxxvi. 26,27; Heb. viii. 10; John i. 12; iii. 16; Jam. ii. 18,22; John vi. 37,44,45; xvii. 12; Acts v. 31." John Willison, The Practical Works of the Rev. John Willison (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1844), p. 450; cf. pp. 447-56, 577-78, 612-14, 622-24. Cf. Thomas Boston, The Whole Works of the Late Reverend Thomas Boston of Ettrick, ed. Samuel M'Millan (Aberdeen: George and Robert King, 1848), XI, 360-85.

[1]William Guthrie, The Christian's Great Interest (Glasgow: John Brown, 1755). John Howie, The Scots Worthies (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1851), p. 432. Robert Fleming observed this rite as early as 1646. Ibid., pp. 640-41. Alexander Smellie suggested that Scots' signing of "godly bands" originated soon after the Reformation when the signing of public covenants, as that of 1557 entered into by Lords of the Congregation and "The King's Confession" of 1581, conditioned thinking about private devotional exercises. Men of the Covenant (London: Andrew Melrose, 1911), pp. 2-4, 150-51.

[2]Guthrie, The Christian's Great Interest, pp. 225-26.

[3]Howie, The Scots Worthies, pp. 640-41, 655. Robert Trail, "Preface," Guthrie, The Christian's Great Interest, p. 1. John

and their contemporaries learned this devotional exercise, which they in turn recommended.[1]

Ministers used the term "personal covenanting" to refer to the decisive act by which a person entered into a contract with God through faith in Jesus Christ. Speaking to those who desired peace with God, John Willison said, "You must by faith take hold of the covenant, and heartily go on with the gracious terms and contrivance of it. And this is what we commonly call

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Brand, Memoirs, National Library of Scotland MSS, 1668, p. 340. James Anderson, The Ladies of the Covenant (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1851), pp. 191, 225. Directions for concluding a personal covenant with God were given in such seventeenth century English works as Joseph Allein's Alarm to Unconverted Sinners and John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Second Part as well as in Guthrie's work according to Rev. A. H., Some Things Needful to be Known and Believed in Order to Personal Covenanting with God, University of Edinburgh Library, Laing MSS, 358, pp. 97-109.

[1]Boston was strongly influenced by Witsius' De Oeconomia Foederum, one of the primary seventeenth century expositions of federal theology. Although none of the books mentioned in his Memoirs that he read dealt directly with the subject of personal covenanting, they supported his views of covenant theology. Boston, Memoirs, pp. 113, 122; cf. pp. 20, 76, 130, 136, 148, 169, 411. Willison recommended a number of devotional books from the previous century, including William Guthrie's work which dealt with covenanting. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 58. On the use of seventeenth century guides for personal covenanting in the eighteenth century vide Rev. A. H., Some Things Needful to be Known and Believed in Order to Personal Covenanting with God, University of Edinburgh Library, Laing MSS, 358, pp. 97-109; and James Fairnie, Extracts from the Diary of James Fairnie, National Library of Scotland MSS, 3466, pp. 1-2.

personal covenanting with God."[1] In making this bargain the individual could not propose the terms on which he would serve God in return for God's favour. Those pastors insisted that God rather than the believer initiated the covenant of grace. To make this point clear Boston preached,

> According to the scripture, . . . the covenant of grace for life and salvation, is not left unto you to make, in whole nor in part, by proposing and condescending on terms thereof, as a party contractor: it is . . . completely made and concluded in all the articles thereof, whether conditionary or promissory; and that between God, the party contractor on heaven's side, and Christ as Mediator and second Adam, the party contractor on lost man's side. . . . And you are invited into the fellowship of it.[2]

The features of the covenant became applicable to the individual when he agreed to its requirements as well as to its benefits. His compliance involved admission of his inability to reconcile himself to God, acceptance of Jesus as his Saviour and mediator with God, and dedication to live in accordance with God's will. Consenting to all this through an act of trust in Christ, the believer was united with Christ. Through union with Christ he shared in the benefits of forgiveness, salvation and eternal

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 186; cf. pp. 455, 484. Cf. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , XI, 348.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , XI, 374. Cf. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 485.

life in the only way possible.[1] Pastors used the biblical and contemporary figure of the covenant to show that the responsibilities which the Christian assumed did not earn for him the promised blessings of God. By it they also stressed the importance of the decision to trust in Christ as the means of entrance into this relationship with God.[2] They identified the positive response of the mind and will in that decision with personal covenanting.

Even though personal covenanting meant basically an internal decision involving one's mind, heart and will, Boston and Willison advocated validating that decision by a written pledge. Believing that faith consisted of the assent of the understanding and the consent of the will in yielding allegiance to Jesus, they agreed that a formal statement was not essential to salvation.[3] Yet, they felt that a transaction expressed in a visible way was the duty of the believer, because it impressed the importance of commitment on him. The examples of Christians and

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , XI, 376-77; Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 187-88, 454, 485, 577-78.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , XI, 375-76; Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 485.

[3]"I do not say that such an explicit or formal transaction is absolutely necessary to salvation, seeing a man's state is safe, if he with his heart close with God's offer of salvation through Christ." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 486. Cf. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , XI, 377.

especially of men of faith described in the Bible as being in covenant with God were used to support this contention. Moreover, when that act reflected "sincere heart-closing" with Christ it helped to strengthen the believer's faith because it disclosed the seriousness of his decision. Also it provided a concrete reminder of that decision to which he could turn when assailed by doubts about his salvation or when facing death.[1]

Writing a covenant with God was primarily associated with initial commitment to Christ, but it was often repeated when the validity of that commitment was in doubt. Guilt was one of the main factors which compelled Christians to review their basic relation to God. There was a temptation to think that sinning dissolved a man's pact with God and exposed him to the danger of suffering God's wrath.[2] To counter that idea pastors pointed out that the covenant of grace was established between God and Jesus on behalf of believers and, therefore, could not be invalidated by a Christian's sins. They added that a man who was in covenant with God would demonstrate the fact by

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 486-87. Boston, Memoirs, pp. 429-34. Guthrie, The Christian's Great Interest, p. 226. Rev. A. H., Some Things . . . , pp. 97-109.

[2]William Gordon noted in his diary on June 2, 1702, "I do therefore acknowledge that God might most justly cast me into hell for breach of covenant if he should enter into judgment with me." William Gordon, Diary, University of Edinburgh Library MS, p. 33.

confessing his shortcomings and seeking God's pardon through Christ.[1] Guilt and other factors could weaken or destroy the Christian's sense of fellowship with the Lord, however. So, like William Guthrie, Boston and Willison conceded that it was wise and necessary for a man periodically to renew his covenant by declaring his adherence to a statement signed in the past. They advised against repeatedly writing new covenants, though, for such practice suggested the error that a man determined for himself the terms of his salvation by God.[2] Careful self-examination, confession and renewal of an engagement with God were called for by awareness of backsliding, distress, apprehension of impending danger, doubt about one's salvation, and anticipation of death.[3] Especially when men thought of dying

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[1]"The covenant of grace is perpetual and indissolvable, and those who are once in covenant with God are still in it." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 487-88. Cf. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , XI, 375-76. Gordon expressed his belief that God's forgiveness was extended to him as he reaffirmed his consent to the covenant of grace. Gordon, Diary, p. 33.

[2]Guthrie, The Christian's Great Interest, pp. 230, 232-33. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , XI, 375-76. "We are peremptorily obliged by God's command to renew covenant with him, and not left to our freedom to come under new engagements or not as we think fit." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 488. William Gordon believed he was obliged "to take hold of God's covenant" repeatedly. In 1702 he recorded eleven times he did this. Gordon, Diary, pp. 33, 136-37.

[3]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , XI, 353-59; Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 487.

did they think this appropriate. Boston spent two full days reviewing the course of his life and re-writing his covenant with God to ensure that his spiritual estate was in order before he died.[1] A strong motivation in each of the above situations appears to have been the desire for assurance of salvation which would cancel out fears of damnation. The record of a previous covenant did not always allay doubts about the genuineness of expressions of faith made at that time. Yet, many were convinced that the re-enactment of a prior commitment, in which a man accepted the same promises and reaffirmed the same vows, could enable him to meet doubt, pain, and death with courage and hope in God.

The re-signing of a personal covenant was also associated with re-dedication to God in worship and service. Besides the pastors of Ettrick and Dundee many in the Church during the early 1700's confirmed spiritual agreements before observing the Lord's Supper;[2] when they had an increased desire for personal holiness;[3] in the course of making a special petition to God,

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[1]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 429-34. Cf. John Brand, Memoirs, National Library of Scotland MSS, 1668, p. 340.

[2]Boston, Memoirs, p. 283; Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 543-45, 837; Gordon, Diary, passim; James Nasmyth, Diary, University of Edinburgh Library MSS, 18 March 1705.

[3]Boston, Memoirs, p. 257; Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 489-90; Gordon, Diary, passim.

such as for the life of a sick relative;[1] or on an annual occasion, such as New Year's Day.[2] For several pastors a formal pledge of faith proved significant in connection with the invocation of divine aid in their ministry. From time to time during his ministry as well as prior to his ordination Thomas Boston made such a pledge. After one observance of that practice he commented on the benefits he received for his parish work.

> Since Saturday last, I have had most sensible experience of the solid joy and peace, in believing God to be my God in Christ. I find it [renewing one's covenant with God] is a blessed means of sanctification. It strengthens to duty; for I have been helped in my work of visiting since that time. It nourishes love to the Lord; and consequently love to and desire of the thriving of His work in people's souls.[3]

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[1]Boston engaged in this spiritual exercise when his father became deathly ill and when his son was dying. Boston, Memoirs, pp. 142, 224. Thomas Reid, a colleague of leading Moderates at the University of Aberdeen, drafted a personal covenant when his wife became dangerously ill. He begged God to spare her life promising to be a more faithful minister and master of his family. The emotional warmth of his piety may warrant describing him as a moderate evangelical. Henry Grey Graham, Scottish Men of Letters in the Eighteenth Century (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1901), pp. 246-47.

[2]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 429, 453; Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 487; Brand, Memoirs, p. 340.

[3]Boston, Memoirs, p. 283; cf. pp. 83-84, 149-50. Cf. Willison's urging ministers to plead on the basis of the covenant that God would revitalize the Church and to confess failure to renew personal covenants with God. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 832, 843, 939. At the end of the century

signing a covenant actualized the decision necessary to become a Christian. When used to renew that commitment, it helped to overcome doubt, because it confirmed inward faith. Moreover, it stimulated renewed efforts in Christian service.[1] Boston

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John Mill, a pastor in Shetland, expressed the same view as Boston by signing a statement of dedication when he prayed for God's blessing on his work. He declared, "'tis my highest ambition to have the approbation of Heaven by a faithful and conscientious discharge of all the duties I owe to my God and my father's God, to my flock and family, to my neighbours and self; and for this end I desire to bind myself afresh, by dedicating and devoting both soul and body, and all I am and have, to the glory of Thy great Name, resolving, in the strength of Divine grace, to cleave close to the Lord Jesus Christ in every state and condition thou seest best for me, whether of prosperity or adversity, and to walk before Thee in holiness on Earth, cost what it will; and in testimony hereof, have subscribed these presents at Manse of Dunrossness this 3rd day of February 1770 years." John Mill, Diary, ed. Gilbert Goudie (Edinburgh: at the University Press, 1889), pp. 33-34. Ultra-conservative Highland Evangelicals carried this practice even into the twentieth century. In 1904 Rev. Donald Macfarlane, pastor of the Free Presbyterian Church of Dingwall, renewed a personal covenant with God in a similar manner. Donald Beaton, Memoir, Diary, & Remains of the Rev. Donald Macfarlane (Inverness: The Northern Counties Newspaper and Printing and Publishing Company, Limited, 1929), pp. 140-146.

[1]The validity of these pastor's conclusions is illuminated by Seward Hiltner's comments on the importance of giving expression to faith. "Faith bears an interconnected and dialectical relation to doubt. Though faith is genuine, when a new situation is confronted the question rises as to whether faith will prove capable of trust now. A new depth of doubt has been cut through and a new depth of faith touched. It is not sealed until the person gives expression of a realization of the new depth of faith." Seward Hiltner, Preface to Pastoral Theology (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958), pp. 129-30.

and Willison, thus, found that the concept of personal covenanting fitted so well into their theology and experience that it was not only helpful but necessary for their spiritual well being.

The ritual of covenanting usually involved examining one's life, confessing one's sins to God, reviewing the meaning of a covenant with God, writing a statement of commitment to God, professing one's faith through prayer and the signing of the statement, and petitioning God for grace to fulfil the terms of the agreement. This exercise often lasted several hours or days. This was the case when Thomas Boston spent two days in December, 1729 concentrating on his spiritual preparedness for death. In that classic example of personal covenanting Boston rose early for his ordinary devotions before undertaking the additional spiritual discipline of reading passages of Scripture and two confessions which he had written over thirty years previously. After a thorough self-examination, in which he used as a guide the Westminster Larger Catechism's teaching about what is required and forbidden in the Ten Commandments, he confessed the errors and shortcomings of his entire life as he remembered them. Then he reviewed the two former covenants he had drafted and drew up a new one which had substantially the same content but was fuller in the expression of his faith.

Following another period of scrutinizing his conscience, he subscribed the new form of his commitment to God in an attitude of prayer and called on God to witness his affirmation of faith. Boston followed up this act of devotion with further Bible study, confession of sin, praise through singing Psalms, collection of evidence for his salvation by measuring his life in terms of biblical descriptions of characteristic Christian attitudes and behaviour, commitment of his family and parish to God's care and blessing, and petition for grace to use wisely the time which remained in his life.[1] Throughout this earnest endeavour Boston practised what he had preached in his Memorial Concerning Personal and Family Fasting, which set forth a pattern of formal covenanting with God that corresponded to the recommendations of many other pastors.[2]

While he accepted the doctrine of the covenants outlined in the Westminster standards, John Erskine stressed the place of intellectual assent to Jesus Christ's being Saviour and Lord.

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[1]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 429-34. To examine the third and final covenant which Boston drafted and signed vide Appendix I.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , XI, 360-85. Cf. Guthrie, The Christian's Great Interest, passim; Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 485-86; 543-44; Gordon, Diary, pp. 25-30; Rev. A. H., Some Things . . . , pp. 97-109; Fairnie, Extracts . . . , pp. 1-15.

Along with Boston and Willison he taught that understanding of Christ's work of redemption, consciousness of inability to save oneself, acceptance of Christ, and dedication to serve God were involved in commitment. However, Erskine chose to ignore covenanting with its emotional overtones and dangers of misinterpretation. The passing of the generation of the other two men, which had contact with Scottish Covenanters, and the arrival of an era marked by increasing interest in the use of the mind and distrust of emotions may account largely for Erskine's position. For him faith primarily was a persuasion that Jesus was the divine Saviour of the world, who purchased salvation for man by his sufferings. With this persuasion came conviction of guilt and of inability to help oneself. Acceptance of these truths then involved personal trust in Christ for deliverance. This made intellectual assent and the act of the will in accepting Jesus as Saviour the most significant aspects of Christian commitment for him.[1]

The Importance of the Pastor's Devotional Life

The necessity of personal devotions in order to maintain a proper relationship with God was affirmed by pastors whose

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[1]John Erskine, Discourses, I (Edinburgh: William Creech and Archibald Constable, 1798), pp. 25-26, 193, 404-405, 407, 419-20.

attitudes were strongly affected by the Reformed tradition. Within judicatories of the Church action was taken both in the seventeenth and in the early eighteenth century to remind pastors of this aspect of their spiritual leadership. The General Assembly of 1638 denoted the habitual study of Scripture, prayer, and an attempt to grow spiritually as responsibilities of the pastor which were to be checked by Church courts.[1] When overtures were presented to the same body in 1705 concerning parish visitations by presbyteries, questions on the minister's leading of family worship and his Christian deportment were included.[2] Although those overtures were not enacted in the Form of Process in 1707, there is evidence that some presbyteries used them as a guide for examining the faithfulness of pastors' piety and service. Presbytery minutes for the first quarter of the eighteenth century indicate that in parish visitations, which took place sporadically, the pastor's

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[1]The Principall Acts of the Solemne General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland, 1638, Sessions 23, 24 (Edinburgh: Andrew Hart, 1639), pp. 31-32. Cf. supra, chapter I, pp. 17-18. For an example of a parish visitation that questioned the minister on these points vide Andrew Edgar, Old Church Life in Scotland, I (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1885), pp. 352-53.

[2]Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1638-1842 (Edinburgh: The Edinburgh Printing and Publishing Company, 1843), p. 359.

devotional life was an area of concern.[1] The "Large Overtures" of 1705 also suggested that at ordination a man should promise to pray, read and meditate assiduously, but the ordination questions stipulated in the Act of 1711 did not expressly mention such activities.[2] The decreasing examination of the

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[1]Vide David Robertson and William Swan, editors, South Leith Records - Second Series (Leith: Mackenzie & Storrie, Ltd., 1925), pp. 20-23; George Lorimer, Leaves from the Buik of the West Kirke (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1885), pp. 58-64; William Wilson, Airlie, A Parish History (Coatbridge: Alex. Pettigrew, Ltd., 1917), p. 323; The Register of the Presbytery of Selkirk, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 327, Vol. II, pp. 187, 259; A Register of the Acts and Proceedings of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 121, Vol. VIII, pp. 418-22. Parish visitation in which the pastor's faithfulness was investigated commenced in 1596 and came to an end in most places by 1725. Investigations at the Stobo Church began with regular visits in 1597 and the early 1600's, were not held during the Episcopalian ascendancy, were reinstituted after the Revolution Settlement, and ended with the third visit of the century in 1723. Clement B. Gunn, The Book of the Stobo Church (Peebles: The Peebles Press, 1907), passim. The Presbytery of Edinburgh noted in 1719 that since 1701 only one parish had been visited more than once and three had not been visited at all. Following 1722 there is no record of a parish visitation to check on a minister's work. A Register of the Acts and Proceedings of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, X, 163. After 1725 parish visitations were an exception rather than a norm as records from scattered parishes show. Vide Clement B. Gunn, The Book of Linton Church, Peeblesshire, 1160-1912 (Peebles: Allan Smyth, Neidpath Press, 1912), p. 112. Alexander Macpherson, "Sketches of the Old Ministers of Badenoch," Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness, XIV (1887-88), pp. 193-216. The Records of Elgin, 1234-1800, ed. Stephen Ree (Aberdeen: The New Spalding Club, 1908), pp. 380-82.

[2]The Acts of the General Assembly . . . , p. 354. The Principal Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1711 (Edinburgh: George Mosman, 1711), pp. 17-18.

minister's inner life by presbytery led to the focusing of attention entirely on the minister's conduct in order to gauge his piety. This did not indicate disinterest in his devotional life so much as recognition that it could not be judged by the Church, for the action of Church courts was only one means of stressing the importance of devotions.[1]

Even when the pastor's prayer life was no longer a matter for official records of the Church, Evangelicals continued to declare that communion with God must be central in the minister's life. Commenting on the "secret duties of prayer, Bible reading and meditation," John Willison stated an idea shared by Thomas Boston that "the life of religion lies in the secret intercourses which are betwixt God and the soul."[2] Inherent within their covenant theology was a strong emphasis on personal religion. Through faith in Christ one entered into a covenant which provided direct contact and fellowship with God. To maintain that relationship a devotional life was

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[1]Vide supra, chapter I, pp. 42-50.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 55. Cf. Boston's similar point in directions for "walking with God": "Lay it down for a certain conclusion, that religion . . . is a conforming of the soul to the image of Christ, and of the life and conversation to the holy law, by a participation of the virtue of his blood and Spirit. And therefore there must be constant endeavours to abide close by Jesus Christ in the exercise of faith, love, and universal tenderness, not only in life, but in heart." Boston, The Whole Works . . . , X, 635.

obligatory because only through prayer could a man claim God's promises of blessing and preserve his "acquaintance" with God.[1]

The devotional life also constituted an essential part of the godly life demanded of a spiritual leader. Boston told his fellow clergymen that a holy godly life was necessary to make one a good minister, defining godliness as "a conformity to God in the whole man."[2] To engender godliness he recommended spiritual exercise on the basis of the teaching of 1 Timothy 4:17. He included self-examination, study to increase one's knowledge of Christ and of the Bible, confession, and the exertion of faith to profit from the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.[3] Erskine concurred with the idea that the minister ought to be a holy man, but did not relate to personal covenanting his teaching that prayer and devout meditation promoted needed growth in holiness. The importance he attached to this

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[1]Thomas Boston, Select Works, ed. Alexander S. Patterson (Edinburgh: A. Fullarton and Co., 1845), pp. 510, 560-61, 568. Cf. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , IV, 74; X, 636; Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 55-56, 382, 386-88, 512, 517, 712.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , IV, 72.

[3]Ibid., pp. 75-77. Cf. Willison's statements that the able minister should press on his hearers "the practice of holiness and all moral duties, to complete the character of a true Christian" and should live a holy life himself. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 835, 841-42.

doctrine led him to charge ministerial students,

> Presume not, then, to undertake the care of souls, without personal holiness, and till, by the blessing of God on your education, and your diligent attendance on prayer, reading, and meditation, you have attained a suitable furniture of gifts and graces for the service of the sanctuary.[1]

Devotional exercises also were linked with faithful pastoral work, since the better Christian a man was, the more useful a minister he would be. In fact, Boston specifically stated that

> heart exercise unto godliness . . . is necessary to make a man faithful in his work, and . . . it is most necessary to fit us [pastors] for the performance of the several duties of our calling, whether in preaching, administering the sacraments, visiting families, or the sick.[2]

Convinced of the same principle, Erskine added that as a result of devout meditations vigorous activity in the service of God would become natural and easy.[3]

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[1]Erskine, Discourses, I, 37; cf. pp. 132, 135, 440.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , IV, 77-79; cf. p. 74.

[3]Erskine, Discourses, I, 440. Cf. "The better Christian you are, the more useful minister you are like to be. Seek, therefore, above all things, to grow in grace; especially in that excellent grace of love. . . . For this purpose, live a life of faith on the Son of God. Abide in him, and constantly depend upon him for all needful supplies of divine influence. Then will you feel your master's work a delight, not a burden, and will vigorously exert your abilities for the glory of God, and the welfare of man." Ibid., p. 76.

The Pattern of the Pastor's Devotional Life

These men who urged pastors to cultivate the devotional life practiced what they preached. Since all three based their teaching on Scripture, Willison and Erskine agreed in general with Boston's naming of prayer, praise and Bible study as "the stated and ordinary duties of all times, to be performed daily, or at set times recurring."[1] Boston regularly began each day with private prayer and the reading of a passage of Scripture before leading the morning family worship, which consisted of singing a Psalm, reading an Old Testament passage, and praying. In the evening he altered family worship by reading and commenting on a chapter from the New Testament and, finally, closed the day in secret prayer, sometimes singing a Psalm and reading the Scriptures as well.[2] Although John Erskine did not keep

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , XI, 343; cf. p. 362. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 70, 386. Erskine, Discourses, I, 37.

[2]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 107, 115, 163, 429. Thomas Boston, A General Account of My Life, ed. George Low (Edinburgh: n.p., n.d.), pp. 30, 77, 101, 108, 116. Boston's concern for family worship and private worship was shared by Willison and other ministers of his day. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 48, 51-52, 70, 87, 91-93, 386. Thomas Halyburton commonly went from his "prayer closet" to family worship where he expounded the Word of God at least once a day. Thomas Halyburton, Memoirs (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, n.d.), p. 21. John Anderson also maintained regular family worship and shared

introspective records of his spiritual exercises as Boston did, he did refer to his concern for such exercise.

> I lament, that I entered on the sacred function, ere I had spent one fourth of the time, in reading, in meditation, and in devotional exercises, which would have been necessary, in any tolerable degree, to qualify me for it. I have made some feeble efforts to supply these defects.[1]

Testimony by other men corroborated that he had "a settled delight in the duties of devotion, and in reading and studying the word of God."[2] Having stressed repeated evaluation of an individual's keeping the obligations of his covenant, Boston set aside Monday mornings for self-examination, meditation, and prayer for the furtherance of God's work through his ministry.[3] On other occasions which he felt warranted

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in similar devotions when he visited other ministers. John Anderson, Diary, transcribed by A. Whiteford Anderson, University of Edinburgh, New College Library MSS, p. 19. (Typescript.) The importance these men gave to family prayers reflected the stress placed on devotional life in Church courts and by ministers of the seventeenth century.

[1]Erskine, Discourses, I, 136.

[2]Thomas Davidson, A Sketch of the Character of John Erskine (Edinburgh: H. Inglis, 1803), p. 6. Cf. Review of Account of the Life and Writings of John Erskine, by Sir Henry Moncrieff Wellwood, The Christian Repository, IV (1819), pp. 419, 420, 423-24.

[3]"Be frequent in self-observation and examination. . . . Examine yourselves often as to your state and case; 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Ask yourselves whether ye be going forward, or backward, what profit ye make of duties?" Boston, The Whole Works . . . , X, 636. Cf. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 382. John

extraordinary devotional exercises he took time for intensive soul searching and prayer. The place of meditation in the devotional life was also recognized by John Erskine when he charged a newly ordained minister to pray fervently, to study the Bible diligently, to meditate on divine things with complete concentration, and to read books which would enhance his ministry.[1] Unlike Boston and Willison, however, he avoided the rigorous introspection connected with their concern to fulfil the obligations of a personal covenant with God and to gain assurance of salvation. He gave proportionately greater emphasis to making Christ and other sources of inspiration for Christian living central in his devotional thoughts.

Bible Study

Though Erskine's attitude toward some aspects of devotion differed from that of Boston and Willison, with respect to Bible study he held the same basic views. All three adopted the doctrine of Scripture developed by the reformers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They equated the Bible with God's word believing that God was the author of Scripture by virtue

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Brand, a contemporary of Boston, also reviewed his life and ministry weekly. Brand, Memoirs, pp. 52-53.

[1]Erskine, Discourses, I, 75; cf. p. 440.

of inspiring the writers, to whom He revealed Himself. Because God either spoke the words Himself or guided the writers, the Bible had divine authority as the sole rule for faith and practice. John Calvin had taught that

> since it is only in the Scriptures that the Lord hath been pleased to preserve his truth in perpetual remembrance, it obtains the same complete credit and authority with believers, when they are satisfied of its divine origin, as if they heard the very words pronounced by God himself.[1]

In the seventeenth century the Westminster Standards promulgated the same doctrine of divine authorship and authority.[2] In similar terms the three Scots named above agreed that the Bible was God's infallible testimony which was to be believed and acted on, although they differed about the meaning of inspiration.[3] Acceptance of the unity and equal inspiration of all

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[1]John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion (I.vii.1), translated by John Allen (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936), I, 85. Cf. "The Scripture exhibits the plainest evidences that it is God who speaks in it, which manifests its doctrine to be divine." Ibid., p. 89. On Scripture being the sole authority for the church vide Ibid. (I.vii.2), I, 86-87; (IV.ii.4), II, 307-308. Cf. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 70.

[2]"The word of God (which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament,) is the only rule to direct us, how we may glorify and enjoy him." Question #2, The Shorter Catechism, quoted by Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 600.

[3]"The Bible, my brethren, is the only complete and infallible directory of your faith and practice. Nothing ought to be admitted as an article of faith, or a rule of life, which is

parts of Scripture seems evident from the matching of proof texts from various books of the Bible in the works of Boston and Willison as well as in the standards adopted by the Church in 1645. The core of the biblical message which bound the Old Testament and New Testament together was the centrality of Jesus Christ. Boston and Willison emulated John Calvin by looking in both testaments for the meaning of the covenant of God in relation to Jesus Christ. They recognized a distinction, but at the same time saw a strong correlation between the two testaments.[1] Although the Scriptures themselves bore witness to their divine inspiration and authority, the inner witness of

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not either expressly contained in, or, by just consequence, inferred from the sacred oracles." Erskine, Discourses, I, 180. Cf. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , I, 64; Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 601-602. With respect to inspiration Boston taught, "The very words they wrote were from him. . . . [He] put the words in their hearts . . . in a manner suited to their native style. . . . The Lord himself dictated it [Scripture]." Boston, The Whole Works . . . , I, 58, 65. Over against this view Erskine, while holding to the inerrancy of Scripture along with Boston and Willison, propounded that the writers of the Bible "though secured by inspiration from error, yet, as to style and method, seem to have been usually left to their own genius." Erskine, Discourses, I, 151; cf. pp. 144, 173, 180. On inerrancy vide Boston, The Whole Works . . . , II, 431-32; Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 597.

[1]Calvin, Institutes . . . (II.x.2), I, 466; Boston, The Whole Works . . . , I, 76. "Have an eye to Christ in every thing ye read, for he is the end, scope, and substance of the whole bible, and every thing is reduceable to him." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 70.

the Holy Spirit was necessary to confirm the truth of the Bible and to convince the reader that the message he perceived was meant personally for him. Calvin's doctrine that the authority and effectiveness of the word of God was established by the work of the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the reception of the word influenced the attitude of Evangelical pastors toward Bible reading.[1] Convinced of this truth from their own experience, they advocated praying for enlightenment by the Holy Spirit. Referring to such a request Boston wrote,

> I spread the Hebrew Bible before Him, and cried to the Father, that for the sake of His Son, He would by the Spirit shine on it unto me, give light into and discover His mind in the word.[2]

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[1]"The word will never gain credit in the hearts of men, till it be confirmed by the internal testimony of the Spirit. . . . Scripture never seriously affects us till it is confirmed by the Spirit in our hearts." Calvin, Institutes . . . (I.vii.4,5), I, 90. Cf. (I.ix.3), I, 107-109. "It is the Spirit of God bearing witness by and with the scriptures in our hearts, that only can establish us in the belief of the scriptures being the very word of God, John xvi. 13." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 601.

[2]Boston, Memoirs, p. 452. Cf. "Look to the Lord himself for the efficacy of the work; and labour to believe the word, that it may profit your souls. For without faith the word will be unprofitable to you; and without the influence of the Spirit, ye will reap no benefit by it." Boston, The Whole Works . . . , II, 426; cf. I, 76; II, 229, 429. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 70; "The word indeed is in its own nature quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword; but it is only in the hands of the Spirit that it does effectual execution, and pierces through the inmost recesses of the heart." Erskine, Discourses, I, 176; cf. pp. 175, 177.

The illumination conveyed by the Holy Spirit not only convinced men that the Bible was God's Word but made its message meaningful and effective for arousing the conscience, stimulating faith, and providing guidance in the Christian life. On the strength of this teaching pastors directed parishioners to look for a personal message from God each time they opened the Bible, as Willison did in his direction,

> Read it [the Bible] with application to yourselves, as if God spoke to you by name and surname in every line of it. Read it as if it were a letter sent straight from heaven to you, to warn you against sin, and to persuade you to faith and holiness.[1]

Thomas Boston took such interpretation quite literally. For instance, he understood God's message to Abram in Genesis 12 as a directive to leave Simprin to go to Ettrick and he felt encouraged by the last verse of Psalm 138 to get married.[2] In contrast, John Erskine recommended a more general interpretation

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 70. Cf. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , II, 431.

[2]"I found my light in that matter . . . was from the word, and pressed me to the thing, as agreeable to the word, and carried me on to it as a duty towards God." Boston, Memoirs, pp. 148, 199. Cf. "I saw my case in Ps. xl. 1-5." Ibid., p. 198. From other biblical statements Boston was directed in his pastoral work, gained comfort when his children died in infancy, and felt assured of a place in heaven. Boston, Memoirs, pp. 258, 304; The Whole Works . . . , VIII, 269. Yet, Boston warned against using the Bible as a fortune book to be opened to find an answer in the first verse read. Boston, Select Works, p. 529.

of Scripture, avoiding the type of detailed guidance for which Boston looked.

Parallel to profiting from the reading of Scripture was applying the word of God when it was preached. Illustrating how biblical truths should be applied, Erskine stated,

> Believe, that God speaks to you in particular, and for your benefit, put such or such a word into the mouth of the preacher. Say, of every doctrine, This is my lesson, I must learn it: of every command, This is my duty, I must practise it: of every admonition, This is a warning for me, I must give heed to it: of every promise, This is my encouragement, I must live upon it.[1]

In particular Erskine stressed the finding of principles in Scripture to guide Christian decision, believing with Boston and Willison that Bible study was necessary not only to discern God's message of salvation but to mature in the Christian faith and life.

The importance of familiarity with biblical truths and of guidance from God's word inspired regular Bible Study. Included in the normal pattern of study was the reading of successive passages.[2] Though pointing out that a person should not feel bound by any formula of Bible reading, Boston suggested, "Keep an

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[1]Erskine, Discourses, I, 196-97; cf. pp. 209-11. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 70.

[2]"This [reading of the Scriptures] is a duty necessary every day." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 57. Cf. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , II, 225.

ordinary [regular pattern] in reading them [the Scriptures], that ye may be acquainted with the whole; and make this reading a part of your secret duties."[1] Along with him many pastors read the Bible chapter by chapter regarding even the genealogies and incomprehensible sections with reverence.[2] Yet this reverent attitude did not prevent them from instructing Christians to compare obscure passages with those that were clear and to give attention primarily to portions of the Bible that were meaningful. In particular Willison recommended,

> Mark the special passages of the word, either these that are most important in themselves, or most applicable to you. Mark the duties enjoined, and sins forbidden, with the promises to the one, and threatenings against the other: fasten these upon your memories, and hide them in your hearts; meditate on them, and pray that God may

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , I, 75; cf. II, 225; Select Works, p. 528.

[2]Boston, Memoirs, p. 473. Others who read a chapter from the Old Testament in the morning and one from the New Testament in the evening included pastor John Anderson, Diary, p. 127; pastor Hugh Cunningham, a contemporary of John Erskine, who said, "I resolve faithfully and conscientiously, as I have hitherto done . . . in the morning to sing a passage of a Psalm or of one of the new paraphrases--read in the Old Testament beginning with Genesis and go regularly through--in the evening the same, reading in the New Testament." Hugh Cunningham, Diary, University of Edinburgh, New College Library MSS, p. 127; and layman George Brown, an elder instructed by evangelical pastors. George Brown, Diary, 1745-1753 (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable, 1856), passim. Cf. the agreement with reading part of the Bible each day made by William Carlile, an elder under John Witherspoon's ministry. William Carlile, Autobiography (Glasgow: Thomas Smith, 1843), p. 39.

> keep them in your minds, ready for use against the time of need.[1]

Agreeing that especially pastors needed to "understand the duties of the Christian life, the motives that enforce them, the hinderances of their practice, and the best methods of removing these hinderances," John Erskine added his voice to those preceding him in order to emphasize that the Bible should be the minister's chief study.[2]

Prayer and Other Devotional Practices

The attitudes of early eighteenth century Evangelicals toward prayer also show dependence on biblical and Reformed doctrines of the preceding two centuries. The Westminster Shorter Catechism's definition of prayer as "an offering up of our desires to God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies" provided a springboard for discussions of the meaning of prayer.[3] Just as John Calvin had understood confession to be the proper introduction to prayer,

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 70. Cf. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , I, 76.

[2]Erskine, Discourses, I, 75.

[3]Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 98, as quoted by Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 711. Boston, Select Works, p. 509.

so Boston and Willison taught that in order to be heard by God one must seek God's pardon.[1] The latter two related prayer to the covenant of grace believing that by his death Christ had procured access to God for those who accepted the covenant through faith in Christ. The maintenance of fellowship with God involved seeking forgiveness for estrangement from Him caused by both original sin and actual sins of omission and commission.[2] Prayer could be made only to God the Father, Son or Holy Spirit and only through Jesus Christ, since there was no other mediator between God and man. Mary and other saints had no power to intercede for living Christians before God.[3] In prayer praise and gratitude were expected, for God was directly responsible for all providential care. Examples and directions in the Bible convinced Willison that thanksgiving should be offered to God for comforts of life, peace and tranquillity, success in one's calling, "sanctified afflictions,"

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[1]"For neither is there any hope that even the holiest of men can obtain any blessing of God till he be freely reconciled to him, nor is it possible for God to be propitious to any, but those whom he pardons." Calvin, Institutes . . . (III.xx.9), II, 104.

[2]Boston, Select Works, p. 510. Confession "is necessary to humble us in the sight of God, and it is the humble only that are heard." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 50-51, 714.

[3]Boston, Select Works, p. 509. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 712.

recovery from sickness, and the reception of "spiritual blessings" through Jesus Christ.[1] The proper approach to God involved awe, reverence and sincerity. Formalism, hypocrisy and any desire for self-gratification were out of place. Yet, when the believer approached God in humility, acknowledging God's goodness on which he depended for faith and life, he could boldly present his petitions expecting them to be answered.[2]

Both temporal and spiritual needs provided legitimate impetus for prayer, as long as requests were guided by God's word and the Holy Spirit.[3] Boston and Willison reasoned that God was concerned about Christians' interests because of the covenant relationship which He established and the biblical statements that God would hear and answer the prayers of His people. Indiscriminate requests were ruled out, however, because God granted only those which were agreeable to His will. Therefore, petitions should be based on "the promises

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 715. Cf. Calvin's view that prayer is right only if it includes gratitude to God. Calvin, Institutes . . . (III.xx.28), II, 134-37.

[2]Boston, Select Works, p. 538; Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 50, 71, 711, 713.

[3]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 50-51. Boston, Select Works, p. 510.

of the covenant" which were recorded in the Bible.[1] John Erskine joined those two men in urging Christians to "turn the promises of God into prayers, and earnestly plead their accomplishment."[2] Regarding the Word of God as the source of "promises" and the standard by which to measure prayer, those pastors recommended the use of Psalms, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer especially as guides for the content and expression of prayers.[3] The mere use of scriptural expressions did not guarantee that God would hear prayer, however, according to Boston. The influence and assistance of the Holy Spirit was vital to praying with proper reverence, humility, affection, and well directed requests. Thus, it was important to beware of resisting the Spirit by suppressing one's conscience, to yield

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[1]"What are these things agreeable to God's revealed will, which we are to pray for? They are good things, both spiritual and temporal, that we stand in need of, and which he hath promised to us in his covenant." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 712; cf. pp. 50-51, 71, 712-13. "Nothing can make praying for things without the compass of the command and promise to be praying aright." Boston, Select Works, p. 538; cf. pp. 510, 544.

[2]Erskine, Discourses, I, 177. Cf. Boston, Select Works, pp. 510, 544, 568. "The scriptures abound with many excellent precepts and precious promises, every one of which we may turn into prayers of requests, begging of God that he would give us grace to obey the precepts, and grace to enable us to plead and wait for the accomplishment of the promises." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 715; cf. p. 712.

[3]Boston, Select Works, pp. 532, 534, 539; Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 50, 714-16.

to the impressions of God's word by which the Spirit's influence was communicated, and to pray diligently looking for the help of the Holy Spirit.[1]

The discipline of prayer practised by Evangelicals supported the importance they attached to prayer in their sermons. To regular personal and family prayers they added ejaculatory prayers and special devotional exercises. They believed that frequent converse with God strengthened the believer's faith and confirmed his relationship to God. Contrary to the impression conveyed by Henry Grey Graham that ejaculatory prayer was always intended by devout pastors to be a vocal display of piety, Boston expressly stated and Erskine implied that such brief prayers for the most part should be silent.[2] By means

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[1]"Learn to pray by the help of the Spirit, for no other praying is acceptable to God: look to him in all your addresses to the throne, and depend upon his guiding and influence." Boston, Select Works, p. 554; cf. pp. 541-48. Cf. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 50, 713.

[2]Henry Grey Graham, The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1906), pp. 337-38. "This is . . . the darting up of a desire to the Lord, whatever be the lawful business we are about, or whatever be the case. And hardly can people be thought to walk with God, that are not frequently sending these swift, though silent, messengers to heaven." [italics mine] Boston, Select Works, p. 639. Cf. p. 511 where Boston speaks of this type of prayer being "sometimes with the voice, and sometimes without it." Cf. The Whole Works . . . , II, 539. Erskine, Discourses, I, 178. Willison's use of ejaculatory prayer appears to have been

of this type of prayer pastors hoped to maintain the continuing prayerful disposition demanded by the biblical charge to pray without ceasing.

Additional periods of intense devotion were stressed by Thomas Boston and John Willison in order to ensure the practice as well as the intention of obeying God's will and to secure God's help in matters of extraordinary concern. For the former pastor such exercises involved fasting, self-examination, confession, renewal of his covenant, prayer, Scripture reading and meditation. Motivation came from feelings of guilt or sorrow for widespread evil, from fear of some impending affliction, or from desire for divine aid or blessing.[1] Following the guides he prepared, Boston often spent long hours in his "extraordinary" exercises of which the following example is typical.

> This day I kept a secret fast, 1. To seek light in the matter of a transportation to Legertwood, proposed to me

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vocal, yet he warned against ostentation when praying. "Before church services . . . be putting up ejaculations to God. . . . I do not mean that you should stand up (as some do) to private prayer in a public way. . . . But, if you come in before worship be begun, it is very proper you have your private ejaculations, and be lifting up your thoughts to heaven in a private manner." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 78; cf. pp. 57, 71, 77.

[1]Boston's guide was detailed in "A Memorial Concerning Personal and Family Fasting and Humiliation," The Whole Works . . . , XI, 341-93; vide esp. pp. 352, 354-60. Cf. directions for self-examination given by Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 163-72, 493-513, 581-86.

> when at the synod; in the matter of adding to the eldership here; my wife's journey to Fife; the determining about the celebration of the sacrament; and the disposing of the MS. on the Fourfold State of Man. 2. To seek the Lord's presence and help in my study of the accentuation [of the Hebrew Bible], and His blessing on the second edition of the sermon [Everlasting Espousals], now, I suppose, in the press. 3. On the account of the affliction of my wife and children, and of James Biggar's family, Mr. Borthwick, Lev-Muir. 4. The case of the church, the parish, and the vacancy of Simprin. These things I laid before the Lord, with some confidence in Himself, minding to hang on for them.[1]

Other pastors also engaged in prolonged prayer and meditation before ordination, before marriage, and at other times when they felt earnest intercession and communion with God was advisable.[2]

Rigorous self-examination was another significant part of the devotions of those pastors most strongly influenced by the seventeenth century concept of personal covenanting. The sincerity of a man's commitment to God and thus the assurance of his salvation would be borne out by his desire to maintain his covenant relation to God, his use of means of grace to determine and to do God's will, and his repentance of failure

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[1]Boston, Memoirs, p. 306.

[2]Boston, Memoirs, passim; Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 162-72, 841; Halyburton, Memoirs, p. 188; Brand, Memoirs, pp. 101-102; Francis Borland, Memorialle of My Pilgrimage and the Providences of Ye Lord Toward Me in All My Changes to this Day, University of Edinburgh Library MS, p. 52; Calder, Diary, pp. 120-21.

to keep his covenant obligations. Through self scrutiny Boston and Willison hoped to discern sins to be confessed and evidences of divine grace for which to give thanks.[1] In practice Boston's over-scrupulous conscience made his introspection morbid. He decided that things went well or ill with him according to his following of God's will. This led to interpreting natural events as God's direct actions to arrest his attention, to motivate him in Christian service or to judge his sin. In spite of the gloomy cast of this devotional outlook Boston's firm faith in the forgiving mercy of God and his recognition of marks of grace within himself counteracted his melancholy and enabled him to minister to his parish.[2] Similar self analysis was practised and enjoined by other Evangelicals of the early eighteenth century who believed that this was the surest way to remove obstacles to the development of strong, obedient faith.[3]

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[1]"Self-examination is a most necessary duty. . . . Judge of your eternal state by your spiritual state, and judge of your spiritual state by the delightful and customary actions of your lives. Judge of it by your hatred of sin, and love to Christ, and by the conscience you make of secret prayer, and reading God's word." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 382; cf. pp. 525-39. Cf. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , XI, 360-85.

[2]For typical examples of his self-examination vide Boston, Memoirs, pp. 90-91, 149, 151, 258, 306. His practice of the presence of God is amply recorded in his Memoirs, passim.

[3]George Turnbull, "Diary," edited by Robert Paul, Miscellany of the Scottish History Society, I (Edinburgh: The

The Relation of Piety to Service

Pastors devoted themselves to spiritual exercises not only to become more godly but because they perceived a direct connection between disciplined piety and effective service in the pastoral office. Although conscious of being entrusted with the task of ministering in God's name, Boston, Willison and Erskine felt that they could accomplish nothing by themselves for the spiritual welfare of their parishioners. The first of the three wrote, "With a sense of my own emptiness and insufficiency for the least duty, I went to God for His aid, seeing how I could not go but as led, nor stand but as holden up; and I was helped."[1] With a sense of dependence on God was linked confidence that God would equip ministers who sought divine assistance to discharge their duties. Motivated by those convictions men urged one another to look to God for the strength and abilities their work demanded and for the grace to use those gifts faithfully.[2] Putting into effect

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Scottish History Society, 1893), p. 428; Halyburton, Memoirs, pp. 199-201, 203-206; Brand, Memoirs, pp. 359-60; Anderson, Diary, p. 2.

[1]Boston, Memoirs, p. 111; cf. p. 93.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , IV, 309; V, 34; IX, 164. "Lift up your heart to the Father of lights, in humble fervent supplication, that he would plentifully pour out upon you these [gifts of knowledge, utterance and prudence], and every other good and perfect gift; and as they are not now imparted

conclusions he reached before ordination, Boston prayed for physical strength to fulfil his responsibilities when ill, requested wisdom to prepare sermons, and sought the Lord's encouragement to lead in public worship, "for the pulpit without Him was a terror." Between sermons he asked for freedom to preach and for forgiveness when he was dissatisfied with his efforts.[1] More than personal aid was needed, however, to win converts and to nourish the souls of parishioners. God the Holy Spirit alone could use the word of God which was preached or read to convince a man of his need of salvation, to convert the sinner, and to encourage and comfort the believer. Thus, ministers prayed hardest "for the presence of God in ordinances, and for his power that will make a

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miraculously, but acquired through the blessing of God on the use of means, join to your prayers, diligent application to study." Erskine, Discourses, I, 75; cf. p. 76.

[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , V, 34-35; Memoirs, esp. pp. 111, 239, 266, 367, 423, 452, et. passim. Cf. "O furnish me with every proper gift for the exercise of the ministry, make me to have a full belief and an affecting sense of Divine truth; bestow upon me . . . the gift of uttering readily what I have conceived, and a capacity for rightly dividing thy holy word. . . . Give me wisdom, O Lord, to direct me in my going out and coming in before this people. Teach me to choose and to minister spiritual food convenient for them; may their souls prosper, and thy glory be advanced in their salvation." James Scott, Diary, quoted by W. A. Thomson, Memoirs of the Late Rev. James Scott (Edinburgh: Ogle, Allardice & Thomson, 1820), pp. 44-45.

change among people."[1] The duty of praying for parishioners became the responsibility of beseeching God "to make the word spoken a convincing and converting word to them that [were] out of Christ; a healing word to the broken; confirming to the weak, doubting and staggering ones."[2] Counting their abilities as gifts of God with which the Holy Spirit worked in ministering to souls, Evangelical ministers saw themselves as servants who

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , V, 8. Cf. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 89-833; Erskine, Discourses, I, 99, 176. Cf. "The success of the gospel depends entirely on God, as it is he who gives efficacy to the instructions even of the most eminent and best qualified ministers, by the immediate supernatural operation of his Spirit and grace." John Witherspoon, Works, V (Edinburgh: Ogle & Aikman, 1804), p. 153. Robert Wodrow assured a friend that God alone was responsible for any good that had resulted from his ministry and James Calder declared on his death bed that he had done nothing worthy of honor that should not be attributed to God. Robert Wodrow, The Correspondence of the Rev. Robert Wodrow, ed. Thomas M'Crie, I (Edinburgh: The Wodrow Society, 1842), p. 318; Calder, Diary, p. 117.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , V, 35. Cf. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 72, 833; Erskine, Discourses, I, 71, 110, 177. Cf. "After concluding the service of the temple, . . . [a faithful minister] will not think that his work is ended. He only changes the place of carrying it on, retiring from the temple to the closet, and there committing the success of his labours to his God. He knows, that though he plant with care, and water with tears, that it is God alone who can give the increase." John Smith, Lectures on the Nature and End of the Sacred Office (Glasgow: at the University Press, 1798), pp. 229-30. On the duty of praying for parishioners individually vide The Confession of Faith (Glasgow: William Duncan, 1753), p. 514; Boston, Memoirs, passim; Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 837.

shared in God's work. Without prayer for God's aid attempts to help parishioners spiritually could lead only to failure.[1] Since God was the source of aid and success, they concluded that communion with God was necessary for an effective ministry.[2]

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[1]"Prayerless instructions will not profit." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 89. "Not so frequent and fervent in Prayer, and therefore so little success in my ministry." Brand, Memoirs, p. 360. Cf. Calder, Diary, p. 22.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , IX, pp. 160, 164; Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 89; Erskine, Discourses, I, 10-11.

CHAPTER III

THE PASTOR AS EVANGELIST

Introduction

The Reformed view of the ministry considered the preaching of the Word of God in order to call men to faith in Jesus Christ the first task of the pastor. Church of Scotland standards upheld that concept, which had been spelled out by the reformers.[1] In a manner more intense than those directives prescribed, however, many ministers of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, including Thomas Boston and John Willison, worked almost solely for the conversion of souls. Their teaching tended to dwell on man's estrangement from God, redemption in terms of covenant theology, repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, and the need to make salvation sure. The Calvinism of the two named above did not prevent their proclaiming the universal offer of salvation demanded by faithfulness to the Bible, but it did lead to a misplaced emphasis on assurance of salvation. John Erskine preached for the conviction and conversion of

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[1]Vide supra, chapter I, pp. 16-20.

sinners too, but, much more than those two men, he also dealt with the ethics and practice of the Christian life. Since he believed evangelism was the most important work of the ministry when many ministers preached only about virtuous living, Erskine stands out with Boston and Willison as a preserver of the evangelical tradition in the eighteenth century. To these pastors, who were "in the imperial sense of the word, Evangelists," John Watson paid the following tribute:

> It is to the everlasting credit of Boston, of Willison, of Dr. Erskine, and of many another devout Evangelical, that while the Presbyterians of England lapsed from the faith and passed away, the Kirk of Scotland was kept true to the Person of our Divine Lord and to the Cross whereby He accomplished the salvation of the world.[1]

Evangelism - The Main Purpose of the Ministry

Evangelical ministers based their belief that evangelism was their primary work on scriptural teaching. They found in Paul's call narrated in Acts 26 an emphasis on winning men to faith in Christ, which they applied to all calls to the ministry. Comparing that passage with Jesus' call of disciples to be fishers of men, a pastor concluded before his ordination at Simprin,

> Ministers are fishers by office; they are catchers of the souls of men, sent "to open the eyes of the blind, and to

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[1]John Watson, The Scot of the Eighteenth Century - His Religion and His Life (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1907), pp. 190, 292.

> turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God," Acts xxvi. 18.[1]

From the same Scripture another man appealed to members of the Synod of Angus and Mearns to be "able ministers of the New Testament" by striving to accomplish the great and valuable ends of the gospel ministry, first of which was "the conversion of sinners."[2] A minister of New Grayfriars Church in Edinburgh also reminded men that "the gospel is preached, to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to the living God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them who are sanctified."[3]

The ministry of Jesus and the apostles set the pattern to follow. Boston saw in his Master's call an imperative to emulate Jesus by leading men to trust in Him.[4] To Willison

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[1]Thomas Boston, The Whole Works of Thomas Boston, edited by Samuel M'Millan (Aberdeen: George and Robert King, 1848), V, 10-11.

[2]John Willison, The Practical Works of the Rev. John Willison (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1844), pp. 834-35, 840. Cf. "Preaching Christ to sinners . . . ought to be the main business of every gospel minister." Ibid., p. 881.

[3]Vide Acts 26:18. John Erskine, Discourses, I (Edinburgh: William Creech and Archibald Constable, 1798), 92-93. Cf. "Pastoral instruction is a chief mean, which God hath appointed to rescue sinners from the ruins of their apostasy, and to interest them in his favour and friendship." Ibid.; Cf. I, 3-4, 53.

[4]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , V, 6.

the "Christ centred" message of the apostles was the best model for sermons of the present.[1] Because the apostles' and Jesus' sermons centred in salvation, even when most hearers were at least nominal Christians, Erskine reasoned that ministers were bound to preach in the same way.[2] Along with serious pastors throughout history those men realized that in order to be truly Christian, any ministry must, in essence, be the ministry entrusted by Jesus to the apostles. They perceived that the repeated New Testament charge to repent and trust Christ was the fundamental word to be proclaimed.[3]

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 925.

[2]"If Christ, and salvation through him, are rarely preached, this will be quite opposite to the apostolic pattern. . . . But I have a still higher pattern to plead. . . . Of our Lord's sermons . . . recorded by the beloved disciple the principal subjects are, the dangerous state of the unconverted, and the nature, necessity, and blessed consequences of faith in Christ, of union with him, and of the sanctifying influences of his Spirit. . . . The doctrine of Christ crucified, is the instituted mean for producing and nourishing the divine life, and should be the centre of our sermons." Erskine, Discourses, I, 53-55.

[3]James D. Smart has cogently stated, "The essential nature of the Christian ministry has been determined for all time by the ministry of Jesus Christ. . . . If we want to know what our ministry is, we must go to the Scriptures and trace out the line that runs from the Old Testament ministry through the ministry of Jesus and directly forward through the ministry of the apostles and so across the centuries to us. The supreme test of any ministry that claims to be Christian is whether or not it is a valid continuation of that line." The Rebirth of Ministry (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), pp. 18, 20.

Ministers further strengthened those convictions by applying to themselves biblical statements about spiritual leaders' duties. Drawing points from Jesus' parables about stewardship, Boston warned his brethren that failure to proclaim the gospel would result in the loss of their talents and shame at the Lord's return.[1] Erskine, who also found incentive for diligence in the thought of the servant's final reckoning, used Paul's expressions to warn that woe and misery would be the pastor's lot who failed to be conscientious in his ministry of reconciliation.[2] The desire to give a good account of their service to God motivated them to persuade men to be committed to Christ.

Those men expressed the belief of many Scots before and during their age. Seventeenth century pastors who made evangelism a priority in their ministries included Samuel Rutherford, James Guthrie and William Guthrie.[3] As one of the Scottish

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , V, 25-26, 43. Cf. "Sad will be the case of the unfaithful Servant, the minister who has neither been so wise nor so honest as to make the winning of souls his grand Concern or Endeavour; or who through his Negligence, or other Mismanagement, has been any ways accessory to their perishing forever." James Craig, Sermons (Edinburgh: Robert Fleming and Company, 1732), I, 421. Vide Matt. 24:45-51; 25:14-30.

[2]Erskine, Discourses, I, 68-70, 135, 153-54. Cf. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 880.

[3]In one of his letters Rutherford said, "My witness is above that your heaven would be two heavens to me, and the salvation of you all as two salvations to me." Immediately

commissioners at the Westminster Assembly, Rutherford helped to formulate statements about pastoral work. One of the Assembly's statements set forth the pastor's duty as being "to admonish them [parishioners], in time of health, to prepare for death" and in sickness to awaken them to consider "their spiritual estate for eternity."[1] Scotsmen found those suggestions in keeping with the Reformed heritage of the Church. Shortly after the turn of the century, the General Assembly gave more particular attention to the importance of evangelism in the parish ministry. In 1708 that body accepted a number of suggestions for family visitation, which had been drawn up in response to requests for a guide. The first recommendation stressed that a minister should have

> the love of God, and the desire of the salvation of his people's souls, and the sense of the weight of the charge given him to watch for souls, as one who must give an account, and of the difficulty of this part of his work in particular.[2]

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before being executed James Guthrie stated, "I have preached salvation through his name, and as I have preached so do I believe, and do commend the riches of his free grace, and faith in his name unto you all, as the only way whereby ye can be saved." William Guthrie wrote the devotional classic dealing with making one's salvation sure which was entitled The Christian's Great Interest. John Howie, The Scots Worthies (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1851), pp. 379-80, 403, 416-17, 429, 432.

[1]"The Directory for Publick Worship," The Confession of Faith (Glasgow: William Duncan, 1753), pp. 497-98.

[2]The Principal Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1708, Act 10 (Edinburgh: George Mosman, 1708), pp. 17-20.

He was supposed to visit homes regularly, where he was expected to speak to everyone about "the necessity of regeneration" and to question individuals about their salvation. The Act of 1711 concerning ordination incorporated the attitude underlying those points. It proposed that a man be asked if the desire of saving souls rather than worldly interests was his main motive for entering the holy ministry.[1] Sermons and other ministerial statements also show that at the beginning of the eighteenth century the task of evangelism was pre-eminent for pastors.[2]

Throughout the century Evangelicals considered themselves to be co-workers with God called to assist the work of the Holy Spirit of leading men to Jesus Christ. In Boston's words they aimed "to impress the people with a sense of their need of Christ," being convinced that their "great business is to bring souls to Christ . . . as the only way to union with God, and

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[1]Ibid., 1708, Act 10, pp. 17-20; 1711, Act 10, pp. 17-18.

[2]"God has appointed a gospell ministry and ordinances in order to bring about the salvation of siners." John Foster, A Collection of the Precepts, of the Promises and of the Threatnings in the New Testament, University of Edinburgh Library, Laing MSS, 77, p. 165. The sermon on the watchman's duty preached at Thomas Halyburton's ordination moved him to pray, "O Lord, help, and through grace I shall lay out myself for gaining sinners to thee!" Thomas Halyburton, Memoirs (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, n.d.), p. 188. Cf. John Gowdie, The Salvation of Souls the Desire and Endeavour of Every Faithful Minister of the Gospel (Edinburgh: T. and W. Ruddimans, 1736). John Brand, Memoirs, National Library of Scotland MSS, 1668, p. 32.

communion with him, and as the alone fountain of true holiness."[1] They sometimes spoke of themselves as instruments of God, as Willison did when he prayed

> for God's pouring out his Spirit from on high upon the ordinances and assemblies of this land, for convincing, enlightening, and converting of souls to the Lord . . . [and that God might raise up] eminent instruments of his glory . . . who will desire to spend and be spent for the glory of Christ and the winning of souls.[2]

Evangelism was the focus of their ministries, just as the preaching of the Word of God had been central in the pastoral care of John Calvin and Reformed ministers of the seventeenth century.[3] Boston and Willison stressed man's need of salvation,

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[1]Thomas Boston, Memoirs, edited by George H. Morrison (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1899), p. 227. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , V, 8; VI, 79. Vide 2 Corinthians 6:1. Cf. Erskine, Discourses, I, 80.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 833. Cf. "Ministers are instruments in the hand of the Spirit for applying the outward means of grace. . . . They are heralds, to publish and proclaim the glad tidings of salvation, the terms of peace and reconciliation to a lost world; and ambassadors for Christ, to perswade men to accept of these terms, lay down the weapons of their warfare, and be reconciled to God." Gowdie, The Salvation of Souls . . . , p. 14.

[3]John Calvin stated that preaching the Word of God, the principal work of the pastor besides administering the sacraments and church discipline, included public discourses, private admonition, family visitation, visitation of the sick, and catechizing. Institutes . . . (IV.i.5, IV.i.22, IV.iii.6, IV.xiv.3-4), II, 274-75, 295, 322-23, 556-58. John Calvin, Theological Treatises, trans. and ed. J. K. S. Reid (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), p. 58. Thomas Edward Weir concluded that in the Church of Scotland in the seventeenth century all other pastoral functions were seen related to the

the method of obtaining that salvation and what obtaining salvation meant in their preaching, calling on families, visiting the sick and dying, catechizing, and administering discipline.[1] Erskine was not persuaded that a pastor should continually ask his parishioners if they were saved, but he agreed that the question ought to be asked both in and out of the pulpit. With the other two he believed that all pastoral tasks were means to the end of winning souls.[2]

Still, the basic means of presenting the way of salvation was preaching. The common view was that "it pleaseth the Lord to honour the preaching of the word more frequently and usually to convince and convert souls; as is manifest both from scripture and experience."[3] In the pulpit the attitude of Boston and

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preaching of the Word. "Pastoral Care in the Church of Scotland in the Seventeenth Century" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Edinburgh Library), p. 8.

[1]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 103, 112, 124, 222, 260-61; The Whole Works . . . , V, 13, 42. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 834-37.

[2]Erskine, Discourses, I, 119-26. Cf. William Trail's statement of that view. A Sermon Preached before the Synod of Angus and Mearns (Edinburgh: R. Fleming, 1749), pp. 4-5.

[3]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 698. Cf. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , V, 5-7, 15. "Pastoral instruction

Willison was that of John Brand, who said, "I thought we should preach to our people, as if they were all on the brink of an eternal state, and never to enjoy another publick occasion of ordinances."[1] To fulfil this aim they filled their diets of preaching with the doctrines of man's need and God's action for reconciliation. A typical example was the well known series of sermons entitled "Human Nature in Its Fourfold State," in which the author thoroughly covered man's fall from grace, evidences of total depravity, the meaning of regeneration and union with Christ, and descriptions of heaven and hell to arouse men to prepare to die. At Ettrick in the comparatively short time of under two years he repeated that scheme along with a summary of the nature and necessity of holiness, all of which took four and one-half years to cover at Simprin. In addition he "began to preach catechetical doctrine; and . . . went through the whole catechism, from the beginning to the end; but

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is a chief mean, which God hath appointed to rescue sinners from the ruins of their apostasy, and to interest them in his favour and friendship." Erskine, Discourses, I, 92; cf. I, 119, 154.

[1]John Brand, Memoirs, National Library of Scotland MSS, 1668, p. 32. Cf. "I preached as never sure to preach again, and as a dying man to dying men." Richard Baxter, Love Breathing Thanks and Praise, as quoted by John Baxter, Familiar Quotations (9th edn.; London: Macmillan and Co., 1902), p. 670. Richard Baxter, Gildas Salvianus-The Reformed Pastor (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1860), pp. 119, 121, 129, 310-12.

at several distant times."[1] That pastor indoctrinated his hearers with the prayer that they might be moved to trust in Christ as their Saviour and Lord. His contemporary at Brechin was of the same mind. To him the ideal minister made "it his main business to hold forth the excellency and usefulness of Christ, both for our justification and sanctification."[2] Christ should be the central subject of all sermons, the scope of which should be "to persuade sinners to come to Christ, and all that profess him to live by faith on him."[3]

Although John Erskine also magnified the heralding of salvation through Christ, he did not limit himself to that theme as the above men virtually did. In declaring the whole counsel of God he applied the principles of Christianity to specific issues of life, in order to remove prejudices, correct

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[1]Thomas Boston, Human Nature in Its Fourfold State (London: W. Lochhead, 1809), p. 46. The divisions of that work are: 1) The State of Innocence, or Primitive Integrity; 2) The State of Nature, or State of Entire Depravation; 3) The State of Grace, or Begun Recovery; 4) The Eternal State, or State of Consummate Happiness or Misery. Boston, Memoirs, pp. 167-68, 227.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 834.

[3]"The end of preaching is to win souls to Christ, so that these sermons are the most excellent that serve this design most: and those, we see, are the sermons which are fullest of Christ." Ibid., p. 925; cf. pp. 922-26.

errors, and rectify what was wrong in his hearers' temper and conduct.[1] The overall aim of his sermons was not basically different from that of earlier Evangelicals; it was broader. He summarized his position in the assertion that

> Christ crucified, and salvation through him; the law, as a schoolmaster, to bring men to Christ; and exhorting the disciples of Jesus to adorn his doctrine, by the conscientious performance of every duty; ought to be the chief subjects of our sermons.[2]

Due to their concern that salvation be the first object of sermons, Evangelicals opposed an emphasis on morality which was not based on evangelism and Christian doctrine. At the beginning of the century Boston spoke out against "moral suasion" and "barren discourses of Christless morality."[3] The distinction between the above two emphases in preaching, thus, began before the "Marrow Controversy," which William Garden

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[1]Erskine, Discourses, I, 27-30, 109, 119. Thomas Somerville, who thought Dr. Erskine was the most "useful" preacher he had ever heard, noted, "Although attached to the orthodox system, the tenor of his sermons was invariably practical." My Own Life and Times, 1741-1814 (Edinburgh: Edmonston & Douglas, 1861), pp. 61-62.

[2]Ibid., I, 119; cf. I, 98.

[3]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , IV, 79; V, 8; IX, 168. In the same period Thomas Halyburton also condemned "legal preaching," i.e. the kind of preaching in which "some press to duties, so that they seem to think that their reasonings are able to enforce a compliance." Thomas Halyburton, Memoirs (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, n.d.), p. 196.

Blaikie saw as its precipitating cause.[1] Yet, Evangelical reaction became more vocal in the years following that issue. In 1726 an overture designed to combat "legal preaching" was first presented to the General Assembly. Ten years passed, however, before a guide for pulpit ministries was enacted. That guide, an act of 1736, stressed the doctrines of man's sin, God's redeeming love and free grace, the blessings of Christ's redemptive work, the necessity of repentance and faith in Jesus for salvation, the practice of all moral duties of God's commandments as evidence of sincere faith, and union with Christ, by virtue of the Holy Spirit's work as the source of all Christian grace and holiness. Ministers were charged to "make it the great scope of their sermons to lead sinners from a covenant of works to a covenant of grace for life and salvation.[2] The act confirmed the position of Evangelicals, who comprised the majority in the General Assembly that year, but it did little to change other ministers' homiletics. In 1744 Willison lamented that there was

> great reason to fear that the foresaid excellent act concerning preaching, is but little noticed and observed by many, and that there is in this church and land very much

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[1]William Garden Blaikie, The Preachers of Scotland from the Sixth to the Nineteenth Century (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1888), pp. 193-94.

[2]The Principal Acts . . . , 1736, Act 7.

> of a legal or moral way of preaching, exclusive of Christ, and to the neglect of the peculiar doctrines of Christianity.[1]

He called for a return to the ministry of the Word advocated by reformed pastors of the previous century.[2]

The quarrel was not over inculcating principles of moral conduct, but with the manner of presentation. Henry Grey Graham misquoted Willison when he asserted,

> It was considered the solemn duty of ministers to show their people that "unregenerate morality can never please God, and in this state of wrath and curse is loathed by Him." That such a creed should be taught in all its nakedness could not fail to have disastrous effects on the morals which the preachers contemned--leading some to melancholy despair, others to reckless vice, and in the "elect" to indifference as to conduct and duty.[3]

Graham withheld related statements in order to support his contention that such men diminished fear of sin while holding out "the prospect of being carried duty-free to heaven."[4] Willison made the statement quoted above after warning against misleading men to think that "they may be good enough, and win to heaven by

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 923.

[2]Ibid., pp. 923-24; cf. 824, 835, 944. Cf. "Preaching of the Word, being the Power of God unto Salvation, and one of the greatest and most excellent Works belonging to the Ministry of the Gospel, should be so performed, that the Workman need not be ashamed, but may save himself, and those that hear him." The Confession of Faith, p. 482.

[3]Henry Grey Graham, The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1906), p. 399.

[4]Ibid., p. 411.

their morality, without Christ or his righteousness." He added that

> morality, or obedience to the moral law, is an excellent thing, and absolutely necessary to be studied by every true Christian, seeing God requires it, and without morality and "true holiness no man can see the Lord."[1]

Although proportionately few of the sermons published by Boston and Willison dealt specifically with moral conduct, they did instruct their parishioners to live uprightly.

Several eighteenth century ministers whose mode of preaching was evangelistic inspired parish revivals. The most notable was William M'Culloch, whose parish mission mushroomed into the "Cambuslang Wark" of 1742. Revival spread as ministers who came to aid M'Culloch returned to their homes infused with new zeal to preach for conversions on Sundays and at annual communion seasons. Revivals occurred at Nigg in 1739; at Cambuslang, Kilsyth, Muthil, and Rosskeen in 1742; at Rogart in 1743-44; at Rosemarkie in 1744; at Golspie in 1744-45; at Croy between 1766 and 1771; at Tongue in 1773; and at Moulin in

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 923-25. The statement which Graham quoted only in part and probably from an earlier edition was, "Let us instruct our people, that though Christianity enforces morality by the strongest arguments, yet unregenerate morality will never please God. . . . For all true holiness and acceptable morality is the proper result of the soul's union with the holy Jesus our living Head." Ibid., p. 924.

1799-1800.[1] Each of these religious movements grew out of an evangelistic pastoral ministry and drew attention, because a large number of people were converted dramatically within a short period of time.

Those "awakenings" followed a common pattern. Prior to a mission the local pastor inculcated fundamental Christian doctrines of salvation through preaching and catechizing. Concerted prayer, additional preaching by ministers whom the pastor asked to help, and personal counselling of individuals convicted of their lost condition accompanied and sustained the movement. ow/ Following profession of faith in Jesus, instruction in the Christian faith and life was given by the pastor and other believers in fellowship meetings. The climax was the celebration of the Lord's Supper, which stabilized the emotional experience of revivalism. It often was the occasion of

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[1]John Gillies, Historical Collections Relating to Remarkable Periods of the Success of the Gospel and Eminent Instruments Employed in Promoting It (Glasgow: Robert and Andrew Foulis, 1754), II, 339-402. James Calder, Diary, ed. William Taylor (Stirling: Peter Drummond, 1875). Angus Macgillivray, Sketches of Religion and Revivals of Religion in the North Highlands During the Last Century (Edinburgh: John Maclaren, 1859), pp. 9-14, 16-18. Narratives of Revivals of Religion in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, No. VI (Glasgow: William Collins, 1839). Alexander Stewart, Account of a Late Revival of Religion in a Part of the Highlands of Scotland (3rd ed.; Edinburgh: J. Ritchie, 1802).

additional conversions because the several days devoted to preparation, communion and thanksgiving were filled with preaching.[1]

Although John Willison and John Erskine were never the initial leaders of parish revivals, they supported such movements. Both enthusiastically associated themselves with William M'Culloch, Willison travelling from Dundee to Cambuslang even

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[1]"Communions in Scotland are for the most part very solemn, and . . . many hundreds, yea thousands in this Land, have dated their conversion from some of these occasions." George Wemyss, "Preface," John Spalding, Synaxis Sacra (Edinburgh: Andrew Anderson, 1703). The above pattern of revival was illustrated in James Robe's summary of the "Cambuslang Work." "This Work has been begun, and carried on under the influence of the great and substantial doctrines of Christianity, pressing jointly, the necessity of repentance towards God, of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and of holiness in all manner of conversation; that it came after such preparatives as an extensive concern about religion gradually increasing; together with extraordinary fervent success of the gospel; that great and successful pains have been taken, to discover and discountenance hypocritical pretences, and to warn people against what might have the least appearance of enthusiasm, or delusion: that the account given by a very large number of people of their inward exercises, and attainments, seems to agree with the Scripture standard; and are bringing forth in practice, fruits meet for repentance; comprehending the several branches of piety, and of the most substantial morality, that can intitle men, to the regards of friends of religion and virtue." James Robe, A Short Narrative of the Extraordinary Work at Cambuslang (Glasgow: William Duncan, 1742), pp. 8-9. Cf. James Robe, A Faithful Narrative of the Extraordinary Work of the Spirit of God at Kilsyth and Other Congregations in the Neighbourhood (Glasgow: William Duncan, 1742), passim. Gillies, Historical Collections . . . , II, passim. John Macinnes, The Evangelical Movement in the Highlands of Scotland, 1688-1800 (Aberdeen: The University Press, 1951), pp. 157, 166.

though he was sixty-two years old and Erskine taking part as the young pastor of a nearby parish. With other ministers they assisted in preaching and counselling. They agreed with James Robe that the unusual effects on many hearers, such as crying, trembling and fainting, were signs of deep emotion and aroused consciences.[1] They opposed criticism, which was made by Moderates and repeated by James Meek, that the revival was merely a mass emotional display rather than a work of God. When historian John Cunningham rejected James Robe's explanation as one-sided in favour of James Meek's knowledge of Cambuslang fifty years later, he accepted a report that was no less partial in its presuppositions.[2] The evidence reported in 1742 indicated that the ministers taking part critically questioned people who were affected by physical disturbances, did not play up such demonstrations, and believed that many were converted without extreme physical agitation. Their solution for distress

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 934-37. John Erskine, The Signs of the Times Consider'd (Edinburgh: T. Lumisden and J. Robertson, 1742).

[2]John Cunningham, The Church History of Scotland (2nd ed.; Edinburgh: James Thin, 1882), II, 317. James Meek, "Statistical Account of Cambuslang," The Statistical Account of Scotland, ed. John Sinclair, V (Edinburgh: William Creech, 1793), pp. 241-74. The pastor who succeeded Meek at Cambuslang charged him with prejudiced reporting. John Robertson, "Letter to the Editor," The Edinburgh Christian Instructor, XXX (August, 1831), 552-54.

caused by fear of God's wrath was to guide the distressed from conviction of sin to commitment to Christ. The pastors of Dundee and Kirkintilloch argued that extraordinary emotional displays did not discredit the spiritual nature of the revival, since in Scripture trembling and crying out often denoted the fear of God and sorrow for sin.[1]

The conclusive evidence that the revivals in western Scotland were "a glorious work of the Spirit of God" was the changed lives of converts. Doubters and Secederes had denounced those movements as "a delusion and work of the devil." In reply William M'Culloch, James Robe, John Willison and John Erskine collected testimonies in 1742 and 1751 that, in spite of the backsliding of some, most people who made professions of faith during the revivals at Cambuslang and Kilsyth maintained them. Impiety, profanity, drunkenness, dishonesty, and immorality greatly diminished in the parishes most directly affected, while, at the same time, converts manifested a spirit of love to their neighbours and a desire to mature in Christian knowledge and

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 936-37. Erskine, The Signs . . . , pp. 28-29. Cf. Robe, A Faithful Narrative . . . , pp. x, 83, 96. Alexander Webster, Divine Influence the True Spring of the Extraordinary Work at Cambuslang and Other Places in the West of Scotland (2nd ed.; Edinburgh: T. Lumisden and J. Robertson, 1742), pp. 5-6, 67-68. D. Macfarlan, The Revivals of the Eighteenth Century (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, n.d.), pp. 144, 199.

faith.[1] After reviewing this evidence, Willison said,

> But let some object what they will against the conversions in the west, because of the outward impressions attending them in severals, for in many the changes are wrought without any noise at all: it is our judgment, if these bitter throws and agonies of some have a merciful issue in landing them in Jesus Christ and true holiness, there is great matter of praise, whatever way the Lord take for awakening and humbling them before-hand.[2]

He and Erskine felt they had grounds to assert that they had observed "clear evidences of the operations of the Holy Spirit" and to call on Christians to give thanks to God for making the preaching of His Word effective.[3]

The Theology of Salvation

The federal theology of the Westminster Standards formed the framework of most Evangelical teaching about salvation. Boston and Willison, in particular, immersed themselves in

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 881, 934-35. Erskine, The Signs . . . , pp. 15-16. Robe, A Short Narrative . . . , pp. 8-9. Robe, A Faithful Narrative . . . , pp. 67-71. Gillies, Historical Collections . . . , II, 390-92, 396-98. John Erskine described the behaviour of his parishioners nine years after their conversion in 1742 as pious, devout, sober, temperate, humble, patient, just, honest, meek, charitable and forgiving. This was evidence that they were "animated by another spirit, than most among whom they live." "Letter to Rev. James Robe," Ibid., II, 392.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 937.

[3]Ibid., p. 934. "These circumstances are . . . far from being inconsistent with a work of the Spirit of God." Erskine, The Signs . . . , pp. iii, 18.

forensic terminology which described man's relation to God in terms of covenants of works and of grace. The former studied De Oeconomia Foederum, an exposition of covenant theology by the Dutch Calvinist Witsius, which enlightened and confirmed the positions he accepted from his teachers.[1] The reliance of both ministers on seventeenth century thought was also evident in their exposition of the covenants in sermons and explanations of material in the Shorter Catechism.[2] John Erskine also adhered to the Westminster Standards, but he referred to the covenants only in passing. He avoided the theological formulas employed by the above men while upholding basic points of Reformed faith, on which they also based their teaching.[3]

Man's depraved condition and the judgment he deserved were Boston's and Willison's usual points of departure when presenting the theology of salvation. They read into the early chapters of Genesis an agreement, in which God promised eternal life to Adam on the condition of his perfect obedience to God's will. Adam's

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[1]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 113, 122, 20-21.

[2]Vide Boston's commentary on the first thirty-eight questions of the Shorter Catechism. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VII, 9-149; Willison, "An Example of Plain Catechizing on the Assembly's Shorter Catechism," The Practical Works . . . , pp. 593-727.

[3]Erskine, Discourses, I, 25-26, 404-405. "The evangelical strain of Boston of Ettrick . . . is, indeed, justly valued by many serious Christians of almost all denominations." Ibid., I, 271.

breaking of this covenant of works gave sin entrance to the world. By virtue of his representation of all men as their physical ancestor and by divine appointment, they come under the obligations of that agreement and share the guilt of his rebellion and its consequences.[1] Using terminology of the Shorter Catechism, John Erskine referred to the "covenant of life" involving Adam, believed that men are still obliged to obey God, and agreed that all Adam's posterity have a polluted nature. However, he viewed man's responsibility solely in relation to divine law, not to a covenant of works having perpetual force. Also he was more ambiguous about the communication of original sin than the other two pastors, who suggested that it was conveyed by seminal transmission.[2] All three agreed that man is totally depraved. For Boston, who believed that even infants who could not actually sin had

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[1]Adam "acted as a public person, representing his whole posterity who were then in his loins; and thus the covenant being made with them in him, they sinned in him, and fell with him. . . . They are obliged to perform its condition, viz. perfect obedience, and also to undergo the penalty for breaking it, for they lie still under its sentence." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 448; cf. pp. 447, 607-608, 612, 616, 619. Cf. Thomas Boston, Human Nature in Its Fourfold State (London: W. Lochhead, 1809), pp. 56-58, 62, 162-64, 214, 218.

[2]Erskine, Discourses, I, 281-84, 298. Boston, . . . Fourfold State, pp. 69, 120, 132. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 618-19.

corrupt natures, this meant that men "are only evil; there is nothing in them truly good and acceptable to God."[1] Willison also taught that man's "whole constitution both in soul and body, is infected, defiled, and depraved by sin, and that from the very womb," but Erskine used milder language to describe the effect of original sin and avoided the extreme statements which the others applied to infants.[2] With them he stated that man's guilt was infinite and deserving of God's eternal wrath, because man sinned against the infinitely holy God.[3]

Since the covenant of works had been broken, the only way of salvation was through the covenant of grace, which God established with Jesus Christ on behalf of sinners whom He chose to redeem. Like many federal theologians John Willison divided the covenant of grace into "the covenant of grace as made from eternity with Christ in name of the elect, called frequently the covenant of redemption" and "the covenant of grace, as made in

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[1]Boston, . . . Fourfold State, p. 66; cf. pp. 67-68, 80, 94, 98, 127.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 618; cf. pp. 616-19. Erskine's strongest descriptions were that "there is an ocean of corruption within us" and that the image of God was exchanged in the Fall for the image of the devil. Erskine, Discourses, I, 120, 282-83, 285, 298.

[3]Boston, . . . Fourfold State, pp. 145-47. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 618-19. Erskine, Discourses, I, 282, 285.

time with the elect themselves upon their believing in Christ."[1] In this view Jesus' death, which provided satisfaction for mankind's sin, met the obligation of the covenant of redemption. The condition for receiving the benefits of the covenant of grace was faith. The pastor of Brechin and Dundee, however, did not hold the Neonomian view of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries that Jesus had introduced a new law of the Gospel, which required faith and moral conversion as the righteousness by which a believer was justified and given eternal life by God.[2] He explained that faith was a necessary qualification, but that it was not the basis of justification since the elect sinner could not exercise faith in his own natural strength. He could do that only by the grace of Christ,

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 623. The covenant of redemption was "an eternal and gracious agreement in the counsel of the glorious Trinity, upon the foresight of man's fall, for the redemption and recovery of elect sinners: wherein God the Father, out of his infinite mercy, gave a certain number of fallen mankind to God the Son, as their federal representative and surety, to be by him redeemed and saved: and for this end, demanding of him that he should assume their nature, and in their room satisfy divine justice, by paying their whole debt both of obedience and suffering, the which they were obliged to do by the covenant of works: and also, that he should undertake to gather all the lost elect and bring them unto God." Ibid., pp. 449-50. Cf. supra, page 79.

[2]Louis Berkhof, The History of Christian Doctrines (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1959), pp. 197-98, 226-27. John Macleod, Scottish Theology (Edinburgh: The Publications Committee of the Free Church of Scotland, 1943), pp. 139-40.

who became surety for His people's believing when He fulfilled the demands of both covenants and exhibited the righteousness by which believers are justified. In effect, the covenant of grace was embraced within the covenant of redemption but was made distinct by its application.[1]

Because the idea of a covenant of redemption required an additional transaction between God and men, which suggested that men partially fulfilled the conditions of salvation, Boston rejected it. He believed that the covenant of grace was concluded solely between God and Jesus Christ. As the substitute and representative of the elect, Jesus satisfied God's requirements by living obediently and bearing the sufferings and death which man deserved. In this way Christ received the promises of the covenant and became surety for the conditions which were required of men. Developing one of Calvin's points, Boston taught that the elect were included within the covenant by being promised to Christ. They received the benefits of justification, reconciliation, and sanctification through their union with Christ, which was effected by the

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[1]"The covenant of grace, as proposed to and made with Christ in the elect's name from eternity, can hardly be distinguished from the covenant of redemption; for thus it is a constituent part thereof, and incorporated with it. But as it is drawn out by itself, to be proposed to the elect in the gospel, and their consent obtained to it, it becomes a distinct covenant . . . both in respect of conditions and promises." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 451.

Holy Spirit as they exercised God-given faith.[1] Since faith was a gift of God, no man could take any credit for his salvation. The denial of man's meriting salvation by his works and emphasis on union with Christ made this view of the covenant of grace biblically valid.[2]

Erskine's view of the divine plan of redemption was similar to that of Boston. He held that by love and grace God gave a definite number of souls to Christ predicated on His work of atonement. Through obedience Jesus supplied the perfect righteousness demanded by God, and by His sufferings He expiated man's guilt. Christ became the surety of the elect by doing all that was necessary to entitle them to salvation, which he made infallibly certain. That Edinburgh theologian also repeated

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[1]"We obtain the enjoyment of those blessings which the Father has conferred on his only begotten Son, not for his own private use, but to enrich the poor and needy . . . when we are united to him. But though it be true that we obtain this by faith, yet . . . the Holy Spirit is the bond by which Christ efficaciously unites us to himself." Calvin, Institutes . . . (III.i.1), I, 589-90. Cf. (IV.xvii.2,20), II, 642-43, 665.

[2]"The elect, and none other . . . are grafted into Christ. . . . Faith the bond of this union, is given to none else." "The benefits flowing to true believers, from their union with Christ . . . are justification, peace, adoption, sanctification, growth in grace, fruitfulness in good works, acceptance of these good works, establishment in a state of grace, support, and a special conduct of Providence about them." Boston, . . . Fourfold State, pp. 220-21, 235; cf. pp. 209-61. Thomas Boston, Select Works (Edinburgh: A. Fullarton and Co., 1845), pp. 453-67.

Calvin's teaching that union with Christ gave believers the right to all the benefits Christ had merited. Although a man's good works did not contribute to his salvation, it was still possible to affirm that a man was justified by faith, because through his exercise of this gift of the Holy Spirit he was united to Christ and justified by God.[1] His position did not expand the rudiments of covenant theology contained in the Westminster Standards. His affinity with the teaching of the pastors of Ettrick and Dundee was due mainly to the points of Calvinistic theology which all three held.

Those three differed from hyper-Calvinists by proclaiming the offer of salvation to all. The latter group reasoned that since Jesus atoned for the sins of the elect only, only the elect should be encouraged to hope for salvation. When the Holy Spirit began His work of effectual calling, the elect would be marked by a strong conviction of sin and some measure of repentance. Therefore, the challenge to trust in Christ

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[1]"In one sense, the sufferings and obedience of Christ is the only condition of our justification. . . . But there is a sense in which faith only, as distinguished from all other graces of the Spirit, justifies; even as it unites to the Mediator, in and by whom we are justified. And surely there is nothing more reasonable, than that union with Christ should found a right to all his benefits." Erskine, Discourses, I, 292. Cf. I, 289, 291-92, 334-36, 404, 417, 422, 426, 445-57. John Erskine, Discourses, II (Edinburgh: Ogle & Aikman, 1804), 247, 291, 358.

should be restricted to such people.[1] This erroneous thinking was opposed by Boston, Willison and Erskine on scriptural grounds. Even though neither the logic of limited atonement nor the points of covenant theology necessitated a universal offer of salvation, the Bible did.

The first of the three found the solution to the tension between the particular redemption of the elect and the universal offer of salvation in The Marrow of Modern Divinity.[2] From that seventeenth century work he drew the thought that the obedience and sufferings of Christ were sufficient to redeem all mankind, even though only the elect benefited from them. On the basis of that sufficiency God offered to all men a Saviour, whose benefits of redemption could be claimed by receiving Him in faith. Boston described this offer as "God's free deed of gift and grant of Christ to mankind sinners." Since the elect were known only to God, ministers had no right to set standards of conviction or repentance which a man must meet before they would hold out God's promise of salvation to him.[3] To this view

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[1]Macleod, Scottish Theology, pp. 140-43; James Walker, The Theology and Theologians of Scotland (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1888), p. 94.

[2]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 168-69. Vide Donald Jay Bruggink, "The Theology of Thomas Boston, 1676-1732" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Edinburgh Library), pp. 276-79.

[3]"Seeing the elect are not to be known, and distinguished from others before conversion . . . so we preach Christ to all,

Willison added Calvin's point that the proclamation of the gospel to all demonstrates God's mercy and unbelievers' wilful rejection of Christ.[1] Christ's injunction to preach the gospel to every creature and the concealment of God's decrees from men also led Erskine to exhort his hearers without exception to believe the gospel.[2]

Because God had elected some to eternal life, those pastors were assured that men would respond to their message. They believed that the Holy Spirit used the Word of God to illuminate the understanding of the elect and to stir them to believe in Christ as their Saviour. In connection with that doctrine they maintained that "the preaching of Christ crucified

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and shoot the arrow at a venture, which God himself directs, as he sees meet." Boston, . . . Fourfold State, p. 168. Vide The Whole Works . . . , V, 48, 278-80; VI, 289, 292, 396; X, 193, 196, 439; XI, 337.

[1]"Why is this covenant offered and tendered to all the hearers of the gospel indefinitely, seeing it is only made with a certain number of the elect? That he [God] may proclaim the sufficiency and perfection of Christ's ransom, together with the freeness and fulness of divine grace, as a sufficient foundation for all to believe, and flee to Christ for refuge. And also, that by this method the elect may be gathered out of the multitude, and the refusers of Christ left without excuse." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 456; cf. pp. 280, 455, 624. Cf. Calvin, Institutes . . . (III.xxiii.14; III.xxiv.8, 12,14,17), II, 216, 227, 232-33, 235-36, 239.

[2]Erskine, Discourses, I, 407, 465.

is the mean which God hath appointed for gathering in elect sinners to himself, and to which he promises his blessing."[1] Thus, they were inspired to preach for conversion.

The Pattern of Conversion

From the Bible Boston and Willison drew a patterned response for which they looked in their hearers. The first stage in the process leading to regeneration was conviction of sin as deserving of God's just wrath, and recognition of inability to save oneself. Next came perception that the atoning sacrifice for sin which satisfied God's justice was the death of Christ, in whom alone there is hope for pardon and peace with God. Meanwhile God's Spirit, who initiated the process by convicting him, would work faith in the individual to accept Jesus' work as sufficient for salvation, to embrace the Son of God as his Saviour, and to devote himself to serving God's holy will. After this would come evidences of union with Christ, aversion to sin, increasingly more vigorous faith, and a fuller appropriation of the benefits of salvation.

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 925; cf. pp. 697, 923-26. "These calls and exhortations are the means that God is pleased to make use of for converting his elect, and working grace in their hearts." Boston, . . . Fourfold State, p. 167. Cf. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , IV, 317; VI, 184-85. Erskine, Discourses, I, 456-57.

Finally, at death, God would complete the sanctification of the sinner saved by His grace.[1] These orderly steps of salvation formed the guide lines for the application of the evangel by the above ministers and other Evangelicals.[2]

The Technique of Evangelistic Preaching

Preaching for Conviction

Persuaded that conviction of sin necessarily preceded conversion, Boston and Willison pressed home the theme of man's guilt more strongly than Erskine did with his probing of consciences. They indicted their people as sinners, declaimed the horror of man's evil and bewailed sins prevalent in their

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VIII, 582-604; X, 491-93, 516-17; . . . Fourfold State, pp. 189-92, 222-30. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 409-411, 425-26. Walker, The Theology and Theologians of Scotland, pp. 89-90.

[2]Of conversion, Boston's contemporary at Cavers wrote, "This blessed work is carried on by the Spirit gradually bringing elect souls, step by step, in the method and order settled in the everlasting covenant, by convincing them of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; discovering their absolute need of a Saviour, with the infinite suitableness and necessity of Jesus Christ to their souls, and thus sweetly and powerfully inclining and enabling them to close with Christ, and to rest upon him alone, for life and righteousness." Hugh Kennedy, The Remains of the Rev. Hugh Kennedy, ed. John Brown (Edinburgh: H. & J. Pillans, 1828), pp. 35-36; cf. pp. 42-43. Robe, A Faithful Narrative . . . , pp. 115-16.

parishes and throughout the land.[1] Such evil confirmed their view that man's will was not aligned with God's will and that the unbeliever could do nothing but sin. With this in mind the former minister uttered the accusation, "Thou hast not only an enmity against God in thy nature, but hast discovered it, by actual sins which are in his eye, acts of hostility."[2] He saw the corruption of human nature evidenced even in the death of infants, whose lives God took just as men kill toads and serpents before they do any harm because of their venomous nature.[3]

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[1]Boston named sins usually when illustrating of what men should repent. Memoirs, pp. 215-16, 221; The Whole Works . . . , passim. Willison listed as many as four hundred sins which he lamented. The Practical Works . . . , pp. 164, 175-76, 493, 937-41.

[2]"O sad reckoning! As many thoughts, words, actions; as many sins." Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VIII, 88-109. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 331-32.

[3]"God takes special notice of our natural corruption . . . in the death of the infant children of men. Many miseries they have been exposed to: they were drowned in the deluge, consumed in Sodom by fire and brimstone; they have been slain with the sword, dashed against stones, and are still dying ordinary deaths. What is the true cause of this? . . . Is it their own actual sin? They have none. But as men do with toads and serpents, which they kill at first sight, before they have done any hurt; because of their venomous nature: so it is in this case." Boston, . . . Fourfold State, p. 127. Henry Grey Graham misquoted this statement when he suggested that Boston consigned dead infants to hell. He overlooked Boston's consolation to believers that by virtue of the covenant of grace the infants they buried would be "raised up in glory" by Christ. Ibid., p. 316. Graham, The Social Life of Scotland . . . , pp. 399-400. William Law Mathieson repeated Graham's error that by this statement Boston justified the damnation of infants. The Awakening of Scotland, 1747-1797 (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1910), p. 195.

The purpose of such preaching of "the law" was to assist the Holy Spirit, who, when about to convert men, "makes the sin of their nature ly heavy on their spirits."[1] Avoiding direct accusations and grotesque portraits of the horror of sin, Erskine tried to lead men to judge themselves for their sin. He so far abstained from censoriousness that he was described by one historian as the "most saintly of ministers and gentlest of saints."[2]

To arouse concern about salvation Boston described the wrath of God which unrepentant sinners deserved, but Willison and Erskine did not elaborate on that topic. They apparently were satisfied that their congregations knew what God's judgment meant as a result of their catechizing and use of biblical metaphors.[3] The first minister sharpened mental impressions of the torments of the damned.

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VIII, 91; cf. I, 557-75; III, 446; VII, 83-90; VIII, 158-59. Boston, Memoirs, p. 98. The Holy Spirit "prepares the soul for faith by the ministry of the law, for thereby he discovers the evil and guilt of sin, and the dreadful wrath that is due for it. He humbles the soul for sin . . . and convinceth it of its need of a Mediator." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 502; cf. pp. 255, 409.

[2]Erskine, Discourses, I, 120-21, 271, 293, 296-300. Graham, The Social Life of Scotland . . . , p. 115.

[3]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 621-22. Erskine, Discourses, I, 472-73, 282-83.

> There they will find a prison they can never escape out of; "a lake of fire," wherein they will be ever swimming and burning; a pit, where they will never find a bottom. The worm that dieth not, shall feed on them, as on bodies which are interred: the "fire that is not quenched," shall devour them, as dead bodies which are burned. Their eyes shall be kept in blackness of darkness, without the least comfortable gleam of light; their ears filled with the frightful yellings of the infernal crew. They shall taste nothing but the vinegar of God's wrath. . . . The stench of the burning lake of brimstone will be the smell there; and they shall feel extreme pains for evermore.[1]

Although he inspired fear of hell, he did not dwell on the subject with intense delight and satisfaction as Graham implied. The final state of the lost comprised only a small proportion of his preaching.[2] Still, it is difficult to understand how that pastor could envisage the extinction of human affections after death, so that saints in heaven would rejoice in God's execution of judgment on their relatives.[3] His explanations serve only to establish that he believed that those doctrines were true and were the type of proclamation which would persuade men to repent and be converted.

God's love and the blessings of the redeemed also motivated men to renounce sin. During the revivals of 1742, some

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[1]Boston, _. . . Fourfold State_, p. 390.

[2]Before quoting Boston on God's wrath Graham asserted that ministers of the period "positively revelled in descriptions of the woes eternal." _The Social Life of Scotland . . . ,_ p. 400.

[3]Boston, _. . . Fourfold State_, p. 337.

outsiders charged that conversions were spurious where "the Law was not the first mean of awakning these persons." Erskine defended the genuiness of such responses to God's mercy.[1] In his sermons he advised "presumptuous transgressors" that

> the astonishing discovery of the love of the Father, in sending his Son to rescue sinners from guilt and misery, may find men alienated from him, and enemies to him; but cannot, when suitably known and believed, leave them in that distance and enmity.[2]

His teaching was not devoid of warnings of God's judgment, but in general it was marked by mention of Christ's compassionate offer of salvation.[3] In the discourses of Boston and Willison the contrasting of God's love with men's rebellion was sparingly used to engender conviction of sin. When the former spoke on the subjects of Christ's sacrifice, the resurrection of the dead, and heaven, he contrasted the comfort which Christians could gain from such knowledge with the terror unbelievers should feel, since they could expect only God's holy wrath.[4] The latter

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[1]"When the Spirit is come the special Sin for which he is to reprove the world is unbelief; and sure nothing can tend more to lead men to view their own sin and folly in rejecting the offered salvation, than distinct apprehensions of the excellency and suitableness of Christ as a Saviour, and the mercy and goodness of God through him." Erskine, The Signs . . . , pp. 31-32.

[2]Erskine, Discourses, I, 356; cf. I, 464.

[3]Ibid., I, 199, 414-16, 463-64.

[4]Boston, . . . Fourfold State, pp. 285-318, 327-38, 345-375.

also seemed guided by the belief that fear of punishment alone could inspire sincere repentance. He used the theme of God's love in meditations to stimulate Christian devotion but not to convict sinners. In evangelistic sermons, in which he mentioned God's redemptive grace, he emphasized the need to feel convicted and to fear God's wrath.[1] This was a medial position in the evangelical procession from Boston's seventeenth century attitude to Erskine's more moderate outlook, which was reflective of the growing spirit of moderation in his day.

Constant discrimination between the regenerate and the unregenerate also marked preaching for conviction. Ministers sharpened the distinction with check lists of biblical characteristics of believers, by which men needed to test their standing before God. They attested that the Christian felt a deep sense of sinfulness, acknowledged his inability to save himself, desired peace with God through Christ alone, looked to the Lord for deliverance from sin as well as from hell, committed himself without mental reserve to his Saviour, loved God the Father and the Son, possessed an aversion to sin, lived a holy life obedient to God, and showed love to his Christian brethren. Basic to this philosophy of self-examination was the belief that sincere commitment to God and good works were evidence of

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 242-441.

election to salvation.[1] Since the eternal state of men's souls was at stake, Evengelicals urged those who could not be sure that they were saved to pray for the gift of faith, especially if the signs that identified unbelievers outweighed the marks of faith in their lives.[2]

As evangelists Boston and Willison prescribed no pattern for the reproving work of the Holy Spirit, but they did try to guide convicted sinners so that their sense of guilt would lead them to find peace with God instead of despair or erroneous spiritual euphoria. Both admitted that there were differences in the duration and intensity of conviction. The former was more suspicious of those who came to Christ too easily than was the latter, who admitted that distress was almost non-existent in situations where persons are drawn to Christ by love. Yet,

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[1]"Let us then ask our consciences, if they have ever been filled with deep and lively convictions of the necessity of this righteousness, and the absolute insufficiency of any righteousness of our own, for our justification before God? Have we by faith received the righteousness of Jesus, and been brought to a humble and stedfast reliance upon it? Have the views we have had of our obligations to Christ, kindled in our bosoms real and supreme affections to him? Does our faith purify the heart, work by love, and overcome the world? Then we may safely believe, that Jesus is made unto us righteousness." Erskine, Discourses, I, 293; cf. I, 307-308, 400. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , V, 44-298; VIII, 159-60, 343-44. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 163-67, 483-84, 489-91.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 483, 490.

both accepted as normative that the degree of humiliation before conversion would be as much

> as is necessary to let us see our need of Christ, and determine us to pass through all difficulties to come at him for salvation; and cause us to loathe ourselves in dust and ashes, and to hate every sin, and break off from it.[1]

To prevent delusions of forgiveness based merely on self-condemnation, pastors instructed men not to attempt to shake off convictions until their purpose was fulfilled. Willison acknowledged that conversion was not dependent on a heavy sense of guilt, but with Boston he actuated deep remorse for sin and believed that this was the better way to approach God who is righteous.[2] He recognized the danger of depression, however, and counteracted it as much as possible. Also he resisted misleading hyper-Calvinistic scruples that a man might not be sufficiently grieved for his sin in order to receive God's forgiveness and, therefore, should continue to condemn himself.[3]

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[1] Ibid., p. 492. Cf. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , I, 556; VII, 86; VIII, 158. "I told him, if he had such a sense of sin and degree of humiliation as made him willing to part with all sin, that was the measure to be desired." Robe, A Faithful Narrative . . . , pp. 115-16.

[2] "Those who are brought in without a discernible law-work, are ordinarily more in the dark afterwards about their soul's estate than others." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 492; cf. p. 417. Cf. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VIII, 96, 121; Boston, . . . Fourfold State, pp. 132-33, 155-56, 208-209.

[3] Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 492.

Erskine also realized that perception of the gravity of rebellion against God was important, but he felt it was stressed by some to the extent that it became an end in itself instead of a prelude to confession.[1] The common effort of all these men was to prevent the equation of conversion with a terrified conscience, while at the same time they channeled sorrow for sin into acceptance of God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ, as others in the Reformed tradition before them had done.[2]

Presenting God's Offer of Forgiveness

At all times when speaking to convicted souls, Evangelicals held out hope for God's mercy. The experience of men of the Bible demonstrated that no sin was too great for God to forgive.[3] Boston declared that hope for God's mercy ends only at death, Willison told men to plead God's merciful nature in asking for pardon, and Erskine asserted that relief was still

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[1]Erskine, Discourses, I, 303-305.

[2]E.g. Samuel Rutherford stressed the necessity of serious conviction prior to conversion. Letters (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, n.d.), pp. 60-61, 68.

[3]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VI, 292; VIII, 133-37. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 183-84, 418-19. Erskine, Discourses, I, 465-66.

to be found where thousands of guilt ridden sinners found it before.[1] By calling attention to the availability of God's mercy, this kind of preaching served as a corrective for intense fear of condemnation leading to despair.

Those pastors urged men to seek God's pardon by using the means of grace that He provided, which included Scripture reading, the hearing of sermons, prayer, self-examination, and meditation on the life and work of Jesus Christ. All three men pointed out that a man could not convert himself by his own works, but that he was summoned to do what he could to walk in the way of salvation. To do no spiritual exercise was tantamount to despising God's grace and to condemning himself. Since the Holy Spirit ordinarily promoted salvation through the Word of God and prayer, it was both possible and probable that men who used them for that end would be saved.[2] Using the

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VIII, 133-37, 249, 252-53. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 183-84, 418-19. Erskine, Discourses, I, 466, 465.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VIII, 125, 134-36. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 417, 425-26, 454-55, 697. Erskine, Discourses, I, 158-59, 176. Cf. "Means to attain and maintain adoption - 1. Pray importunately to God for the Spirit, Luke 11:13; Romans 8:11. 2. Endeavour to attain faith in Christ Jesus, Galatians 3:26. . . . 3. Study sincere and unfeigned repentance, Jeremiah 31:18; 29:20. 4. Eschew unnecessary and sinful communion with the wicked, . . . 2 Corinthians 6:17,18." Thomas Heart, Notebook, National Library of Scotland MSS, 3004, Entry of 1762.

illustration of the impotent man described in John 5:5-8, Boston charged, "Do what you can; and it may be while ye are doing what ye can for yourselves God will do for you what ye cannot."[1] He did not assure his congregation that the means of grace were bound to issue in salvation, but he was convinced that all men would benefit from them. Even if a man was not converted he would be a better person, since

> the means of grace serve, as it were, to embalm many dead souls which are never quickened by them; though they do not restore them to life, yet they keep them from smelling so rank as otherwise they would do.[2]

Without digressing to consider outcomes other than conversion, John Erskine also declared that the probability of reconciliation with God should move men to pray for faith and to heed God's Word.[3]

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VIII, 135-36. Cf. "Though ye cannot recover yourselves, nor take hold of the saving help offered to you in the gospel; yet even by the power of nature, ye may use the outward and ordinary means, whereby Christ communicates the benefits of redemption to ruined sinners." Ibid., p. 134. Cf. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 417, 697.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VIII, 134.

[3]"By these, as means, the Spirit savingly works; and therefore, we ought to place ourselves under them, waiting for his influence to make them effectual: praying that he would bear testimony to the word of his grace, and that it may prove the word by which we shall be saved." Erskine, Discourses, I, 176; cf. I, 158-59.

Such exhortations obviate Graham's petulant remark,

> It is difficult to make out what the gospel teachers would have a man do to secure salvation, seeing that logically and theologically the non-elect can do nothing, and the elect need do nothing.[1]

He did not probe the thought of Boston, Willison and Erskine deeply enough. They did not teach that God's election made man's salvation a gift to be received passively. In order to obtain it a man had to avail himself of the means by which it was imparted. To do nothing was to invite damnation. Answering the delusion that it was needless for a man to exert himself to seek God's forgiveness, Boston declared,

> If ever the spirit of God graciously influence your souls, ye will become thoroughly sensible of your absolute inability, and yet enter upon a vigorous use of means. Ye will do for yourselves, as if ye were to do all; and yet overlook all ye do, as if ye had done nothing.[2]

The belief that no matter how much the non-elect repented of sin and prayed for forgiveness their efforts would be in vain was also misguided. Those Evangelicals pointed out that it was characteristic of the non-elect to despise or misuse the means of grace in their failure to recognize their need of Christ. The opportunity to study God's Word, to examine one's relation

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[1]Graham, The Social Life of Scotland . . . , p. 411.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VIII, 135.

to God, and to pray for salvation was open to all, and the elect would take advantage of the opportunity.[1]

Pleading for Decision

Because a man's response to the evangel determined either his salvation or damnation, the above pastors pleaded with their parishioners to accept the Son of God as their Saviour. The first of the three dramatized the extremity of man's need, which made that commitment of utmost importance.

> Sirs, if we saw you putting a cup of poison to your mouth, we would fly to you, and snatch it out of your hands. If we saw the house on fire about you, while ye were fast asleep in it, we would run to you, and drag you out of it. But alas! ye are in ten thousand times greater hazard. Yet we can do no more, but tell you your danger; invite, exhort, beseech, and obtest you, to look to yourselves. . . . Wherefore, I cry unto you in the name of the Lord, . . . Flee to Jesus Christ out of this your natural state.[2]

Similar language was used by Willison,

> Strangers to God, . . . You are under the heavy clouds of God's wrath and indignation.--You sit constantly on the very borders of hell.--O sinner! consider what a day of darkness . . . a dying hour will prove to thee. . . . Come and "acquaint yourselves with God now," accept of his offers of mercy, and "be at peace" with him through Christ.[3]

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[1]Ibid., VIII, 134-36; Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 417, 697; Erskine, Discourses, I, 158-59.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VIII, 114-15.

[3]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 315; cf. pp. 316, 333, 415-16.

At times Erskine portrayed the sinner's jeopardy, but more often he announced in less vivid terms,

> Upon the entertainment given a preached gospel, depends endless happiness or woe. Happy will it be for thee, who hearkenest to its calls . . . , but thou who rejectest them, art lost and undone.[1]

The uncertainty of life was also used to arouse men to commit themselves to Christ. During the eighteenth century infant morality was high, illness was frequently fatal, and adult life spans were brief. Since death often came without warning from a variety of prevalent causes, Boston and Willison demanded immediate responses of repentance and faith even from children.[2] Erskine also was not averse to reminding congregations occasionally of "the near prospect of death and eternity."[3]

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[1]Erskine, Discourses, I, 415; cf. I, 166. "Wouldst thou purchase the pleasures of a ramble, or debauch, by enduring, for a month, the exquisite tortures of a gout or a gravel? . . . If this appears to thee absurd, why dost thou, for the pleasures of sin which are but for a season, forfeit a blessed, and incur a miserable eternity?" Ibid., I, 479.

[2]"And may ye not die young? Are there not in the churchyard such as have died in childhood? are there not boys and girls in their graves there, young men and maids, men and women in their prime? I suspect that, on a just calculation, there would be found far more such than those of grey hairs. Therefore delay not to make ready though young." Thomas Boston, Select Works, ed. Alexander S. Patterson (Edinburgh: Fullarton and Co., 1845), p. 503. Cf. . . . Fourfold State, pp. 266-68, 273-75, 284-85. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 323, 329, 333, 395-96, 599.

[3]Erskine, Discourses, I, 293-94, 416.

Appeals based on God's mercy were infrequently stated in comparison to those based on fear of death and hell. When Evangelicals of the first decades of the century mentioned the comfort of God's love, they also warned, "If you do not hearken to Christ, you have no way to prevent eternal destruction," and commented, "Surely the thought of appearing before an angry God after death must be terrible to a Christless soul."[1] It remained for Erskine to state in 1758, when a more rational approach was preferred to such fear inspiring preaching,

> I choose not to awe you by authority. I would rather draw you by the cords of love. Can you reject him, who, for your sake, left the bosom of the Father, and voluntarily endured the most exquisite sufferings?[2]

He sometimes mixed the threat of condemnation with the thought of mercy, but a comparison of appeals for decisions of faith shows that he was more disposed than Boston and Willison to base them on God's compassion.[3] It is not easy to ascertain

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 332. Cf. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 269-71; VIII, 288, 346.

[2]Erskine, Discourses, I, 167.

[3]"Despair not of escaping deserved vengeance; for, lo! God hath appeared to shield from it the very chief of sinners. . . . He came to purchase salvation; and He now comes, in the gospel, to offer it. . . . And thou, O perplexed and anxious soul! art even now warranted, invited, commanded, to come to Christ, that thou mayest have life." Ibid., I, 341-42; cf. I, 167-69, 307-308, 400-401, 415-16. "Well, what answer shall I carry back to my Master? . . . 'Lord, they are a company of obstinate sinners thou sentest me to; I entreated them to

how men who established close relationships with parishioners, expended strength freely ministering to the poor and sick, and felt deeply personal suffering and loss could repeatedly threaten congregations with damnation. Since Boston was more closely in touch with the evangelical tradition of the seventeenth century, he tended to employ more of the vivid and emphatic warnings of that age. Yet, he felt that he had learned that denunciation of sinners by itself was wrong.[1] The best answer is his summary of the meaning of preaching the Word of God faithfully.

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hearken to thy voice, and leave their sins; but there was no concern, no fear, no sense of sin among them.' . . . Or shall I have ground to say? 'Lord, I have offered sinners a Redeemer, and entreated them to close with him. Though they stood long out against thy threatenings, yet when they heard thy entreaties, their hearts began to relent, . . . and I hope they are gone home to make a personal covenant with him this night, and sincerely design to return and seal it to-morrow [at the Lord's Supper].'" Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 333; cf. pp. 331, 411-12. "Will ye lye down, and sleep another night at ease in this case? Do it not; for before another day, ye may be sifted before God's dreadful tribunal, in the grave clothes of your corrupt state; and your vile bodies cast into the pit of destruction, as a corrupt lump, to be for ever buried out of God's sight. . . . But come speedily to Jesus Christ: he hath cleansed as vile souls as yours; and he will yet 'cleanse the blood that he hath not cleansed.'" Boston, ... Fourfold State, p. 133; cf. pp. 149, 156-58, 170, 202, 208, 261-62, 274-75, 284-85, 296, 317-18, 344, 375, 385, 393, 402.

[1]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 35, 59-60.

> The terrors of hell, as well as the joys of heaven, are set before you, to stir you up to a cordial receiving of him [Jesus] with all his salvation; and to incline you into the everlasting fire.[1]

The Act of Commitment

As pastors preached for conversion they called on men to exercise faith, the essence of which was trust. Boston and Willison granted that intellectual acceptance of the truths revealed in the Word of God about God's righteousness, man's sinfulness, and Jesus' ability to save was antecedent and necessary to saving faith.[2] But that was insufficient, for "though saving faith can never be without this assent, or historical faith: yet historical faith may be, where saving faith is not."[3] Saving faith consisted of a commitment of the heart and will, in which the individual received and relied on Christ alone for salvation. Receiving Christ meant heeding His prophetic teaching in the Word of God, acknowledging His priestly sacrifice for the salvation of men, and submitting to His kingly rule in life.

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[1]Boston, . . . Fourfold State, p. 158; cf. p. 404. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VIII, 357.

[2]Boston, Select Works, pp. 432, 466; . . . Fourfold State, pp. 176-79; The Whole Works . . . , II, 504; IV, 541; VII, 280, 284; X, 377. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 501, 642, 693.

[3]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 501; cf. p. 642. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , II, 400.

Relying on Christ implied trusting for deliverance from sin and God's wrath on the basis of Christ's righteousness alone.[1] A fitting analogy was used by John Brand to illustrate the meaning of such commitment.

> I explained it thus, How is it that a woman comes to be a man's wife? Is it not by consent to him, taking him to be her husband; and thereafter to live with him and seek to please him, being married to him; so etc.[2]

The pledge of obedience to Christ included in the exercise of faith confirmed the commitment of a man's will and emotions. The faith by which a man received eternal life, thus, involved his understanding, his heart, and his will, "the understanding knowing and assenting, and the will embracing and consenting."[3]

A different conception of faith was advanced by John Erskine. From his viewpoint it basically was an intellectual

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[1]"Saving faith is a grace, or special gift of God to his elect, wrought in their hearts by the Spirit and word of God: whereby they, being convinced of sin and misery, and of their own inability to recover themselves out of their lost estate, do not only assent to the truth of God's records concerning Christ in his word, but also receive and rest upon Christ and his righteousness, for pardon of sin and salvation, according as he is offered in the gospel." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 501; cf. pp. 502, 642-43, 693-94. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , II, 401, 405; VI, 594; X, 377. Select Works, pp. 432, 466. . . . Fourfold State, pp. 181-82.

[2]Brand, Memoirs, p. 325. (transcription of abbreviated words and symbols mine.) Cf. Boston's use of this analogy in The Whole Works . . . , VIII, 123; X, 516-17; . . . Fourfold State, pp. 157, 231.

[3]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , II, 401.

exercise consisting of persuasion and acknowledgment that Jesus is the Saviour of the world, who in His offices of prophet, priest and king procured salvation for man by His sufferings. He contended that belief in one radical comprehensive truth "constitutes men true Christians, and renews and sanctifies their hearts," which truth was that

> the only begotten of the Father was sent by him to this wretched world, to be the propitiation and advocate of sinners; and that a fulness of grace dwells in him, and power is given him over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to those given him of the Father.[1]

Undoubtedly, the rationalism which so strongly affected Scottish thought at this period influenced Erskine's insistence on the primacy of intellectual exercise in faith. He recognized, however, the danger of substituting formal acceptance of a creed for true faith. Belief which issued in salvation had to result in an accompanying consent of the will and consecration of the heart.

> It is not, however, a persuasion of Christian doctrines derived from the prejudices of education, or barely founded on external evidence, which is saving faith. His faith only is saving, whose persuasion of these, flows from spiritual discoveries of their importance, beauty, and glory; and whose soul, in consequence of it, betakes itself to Christ,

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[1]John Erskine, Dissertation on the Nature of Christian Faith (Edinburgh: J. Ritchie, 1804), pp. 15-16; cf. pp. 9, 12. Erskine, Discourses, I, 227, 419-20.

> as able and willing to save to the uttermost, and rests and relies upon him alone for salvation.[1]

He agreed with John Owen that "faith is in the understanding, in respect of its being and subsistence; in the will and heart, in respect of its actual workings."[2] Consent of the will, trust, and love for Christ, thus, were associated with faith as the inevitable outworking of the cardinal intellectual exercise in saving faith.[3] Insofar as Erskine taught this, he was in general agreement with the Reformed doctrine of commitment to Christ to which Boston and Willison adhered so closely.[4]

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[1]Erskine, Discourses, I, 420. Vide I, 193-95, 211, 293, 307, 325-26, 338, 407, 419-20. Erskine, Dissertation . . . , pp. 26, 33, 36, 50-51.

[2]John Owen, Catechism, quoted by Erskine, Dissertation . . . , p. 8.

[3]"I acknowledge the generality of Calvinists have considered the consent of the will as included in receiving Christ. Nor will I preemptorily deny, that in some scriptures receiving Christ may signify, the heart chusing, and the affections embracing and cleaving to Christ, as our Prophet, Priest, and King; and the whole soul consenting to, approving of, and delighting in the Saviour, and in the gospel-scheme of salvation through him. But then, in these scriptures, it denotes something different from faith, though I readily allow it intimately connected with, inseparably attending, or necessarily flowing from faith, and therefore essential to the Christian character." Ibid., p. 36.

[4]Cf. "By this faith (whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls), a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein. . . . But the principal acts of saving faith are, accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by

Despite their divergent interpretations of the essence of saving faith those three Evangelical pastors offered similar directions for commitment to God. Contrary to Henry Grey Graham's charge that their admonitions "to close with Christ" were all a matter of spiritual emotion, their teaching clearly indicated that much more was involved.[1] They declared that men seeking to be reconciled to God must first confess their iniquity to God in prayer. The prayer Erskine taught men to pray was typical.

> I feel, I acknowledge, that I am guilty. . . . Often have I committed the sins cautioned against; often have I neglected the duties recommended. Now, at length, I see the evil of my ways, and my doings, which have not been good. Wherefore, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.[2]

The basis for such guidance was belief that sincere, voluntary, specific and repentant confession accompanied true faith.[3]

Next, ministers counselled penitents to ask for the gift of faith in the spirit of the petition, "Lord, I believe, help

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virtue of the covenant of grace." The Westminster Confession of Faith, XVI, 2, quoted by James Benjamin Green, A Harmony of the Westminster Presbyterian Standards (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1955), pp. 93-94.

[1]Graham, The Social Life of Scotland . . . , p. 411. Such phrases as "close with Christ" were based on biblical statements according to Willison. The Practical Works . . . , p. 501.

[2]Erskine, Discourses, I, 198; cf. I, 400, 465.

[3]Boston, . . . Fourfold State, pp. 180-81, 184-87;

thou mine unbelief." Since man was impotent to trust in Jesus Christ, he needed God's help. Boston and Willison suggested praying simply, "Give me faith." Due to his peculiar view of faith, however, Erskine advised specific prayer that the Holy Spirit "would bear testimony to the word of his grace, and that it may prove the word by which we shall be saved, while our understanding is divinely enlightened to discern its truth and excellency."[1]

Confession and requests for faith led up to conscious, prayerful commitment to God. According to Thomas Boston the act of believing was accomplished by prayer, wherein a person "solemnly and in express words" declared to God his acceptance of Christ as his Saviour and of the relationship to God defined by the covenant of grace.[2] Willison and Erskine generally

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Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 417, 503-507; Erskine, Discourses, I, 400.

[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 185. Cf. pp. 417, 502; Boston, . . . Fourfold State, pp. 155-56, 208-209; Erskine, Discourses, I, 176-77, 400-401.

[2]Boston, Select Works, pp. 466-67. Cf. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , II, 405; VIII, 121; XI, 348. Boston, . . . Fourfold State, pp. 155-56, 208-209. Cf. "It is the duty and interest of every Christian that has embraced the offer of the gospel expressly, formally and viva voce to own the same before the Lord." Rev. A. H., "Some Things Needful to be Known and Believed in Order to Personal Covenanting," Ministers' Letters 1714 ff., University of Edinburgh, Laing MSS, 358, pp. 97-109.

agreed with this position.[1] Although all three conceived of commitment as a definite act, they perceived that it should begin a continuing obedience. The pastor of Ettrick called attention to the importance of perseverance in his warning, "Take heed to yourselves and beware of apostacy: for it is not the beginning well, but holding on to the end, that will secure your salvation."[2] Trying to inspire allegiance to God, a contemporary of his at Dundee gave the challenge,

> You must resolve and engage, in the "strength of Christ our Surety," to live wholly to your covenanted God, and walk with him in newness of life, perform every duty he commands, suffer patiently what he inflicts, watch against every sin he forbids, and manfully fight against his enemies.[3]

In similar terms Erskine also imparted counsel to demonstrate sincere faith by maintaining good works, as Christian pastors had done in every century.[4]

In addition to urging a determinate profession of faith, Boston and Willison recommended that it be confirmed by signing

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 417-18, 501-502. Erskine, Discourses, I, 199, 407, 416, 426.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , II, 36. Cf. "Let none think that they may live carelessly, having once got grace, because it cannot be lost; for besides, that one's giving himself quite up to such an opinion and course is inconsistent with saving grace, God has joined together the ends and means, and none shall separate them." Ibid., II, 35-36.

[3]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 324; cf. pp. 835-37. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VIII, 364-65, 597-604.

[4]Erskine, Discourses, I, 427.

a written acceptance of the covenant of grace administered by Jesus Christ. The former pastor outlined what this covenanting was.

> It lies in a solemn professing before the Lord, that we take hold of his covenant, believing on the name of his Son as the Saviour of the world, and our Saviour, and that in and through him, he will be our God, and we shall be his people; and that we are from the heart content, and consent to take him for our portion, Lord and Master, and resign ourselves to him only, wholly and forever.[1]

In a typical covenant William Carlile confessed his sinfulness; renounced the devil, the world and the flesh; dedicated himself to serve God; declared his faith in Christ as his redeemer, prophet, priest, king and head; promised to make the glory of God his aim and to struggle against the enemies of God and his soul; and asked for aid to keep his part of the covenant.[2] This pattern would have satisfied Willison fully, since he divided meaningful commitment into renunciation of Satan's government, the world, the flesh and self-righteousness; acceptance of the gospel-method of salvation through Christ as "well-ordered in all things"; self dedication to God; and solemn engagement in

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , XI, 348. Cf. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 186.

[2]William Carlile, Autobiography (Glasgow: Thomas Smith, 1843), pp. ix-xiii. For a discussion of covenanting vide supra, pp. 79-90.

covenant with God.[1] The practice of crystalizing faith with written covenants was ignored, however, by Erskine, who modified much of covenant theology and its accompanying forms of expression.[2]

The Place of Assurance

The authors of the Fourfold State and A Sacramental Directory pointed to assurance of salvation as the goal for which Christians should strive. Concern for evidence of salvation was inevitable in the light of the fear of reprobation engendered by sermons about God's wrath and by the distinguishing of believers from unbelievers. Before the opportunity to receive Christ was lost, it was necessary for each man to make sure that he was among the elect. With that assurance he would become a better servant of God, because "it quiets the mind, and removes the fear of death; it enlarges the heart with love and thankfulness to God, and gives strength and cheerfulness in the performance of commanded duties."[3] The above writers did not pretend that

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 324; cf. pp. 835-37. Boston, Select Works, pp. 466-67; . . . Fourfold State, pp. 155-56.

[2]Erskine, Discourses, I, 198-99, 400-401.

[3]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 649; cf. pp. 281, 390, 528, 648-49. Cf. Boston, Memoirs, pp. 10, 432-33; . . . Fourfold State, p. 293.

this certainty was essential to saving faith, but their denoting effort to gain it as God's command and man's duty made it a supremely important objective.[1]

According to Boston and Willison the ground for assurance lay ultimately in the integrity of God, but also involved factors which a man could discern in his life. The former minister told each believer,

> If thou hast as much credit to give to the word of God, as thou wouldst allow to the word of an honest man offering thee a gift, and saying take it, and it is thine; thou mayest believe that God is thy God, Christ is thine, his salvation is thine, thy sins are pardoned, thou hast strength in him for repentance and for holiness.[2]

To determine the genuineness of his acceptance of God's forgiveness a person needed to look within himself for the witness of the Holy Spirit and a consciousness of peace.[3] This self

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[1]"This persuasion and assurance being most necessary to the spiritual life, it is the great duty of everyone to press forward, in the acts of faith, until they attain it." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 281; cf. pp. 648-49. Of 87 questions Willison proposed for discussion by religious societies, 27 were related to and three dealt with the subject of assurance. John Willison and John Bonar, The Duty and Advantage of Religious Societies, Proven from Scripture and Reason (Edinburgh: T. Lumisden and J. Robertson, 1793), pp. 20-26. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 411-93; Select Works, pp. 776-84.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 64; cf. VIII, 364-65. "I trust not in my faith, but in thy faithfulness." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 281.

[3]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , V, 566-67. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 528, 648.

scrutiny of subjective convictions often aroused suspicions that he was deceiving himself, however. He might feel that he had not been completely sincere in his commitment or that inner calm was actually sinful self complacency. To overcome those doubts the evidence of objective behaviour was needed. Boston and Willison listed characteristics of the Christian, which they drew from the Bible, with which men could compare themselves.[1] If a man measured up to that standard, he had reason to believe that he was one of the elect. Erskine also taught that good works were evidences of salvation, but he did not emphasize repeated self-examination for such proof as did the other two.[2]

Boston's excessive preaching of self-examination tended to aggravate doubt rather than to bring assurance. The weakness of his system was revealed, particularly, in his outline of a chain of duties and graces which were bound to yield certainty of salvation. He stated that outward Christian actions were

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VIII, 159-60, 343-44. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 163-67, 483-84, 489-91.

[2]"Multitudes who were firmly persuaded that their right to pardon and eternal life was founded only on the merits of Jesus, have at the same time been sensible, that they would never in fact be delivered from the wrath to come, or attain the recompence of reward, if they wickedly departed from their God: and hence they have viewed their own good works as comfortable evidences of forgiveness of sins and acceptance with God, and encouragements to a holy confidence in expecting them." Erskine, Discourses, I, 313-14; cf. I, 458.

valid proof of salvation if they stemmed from sincere motives. Those motives were valid if they came from habits of grace, which in turn were dependent on justification. Justification, of course, could be based only on faith which embraced Christ. Thus, a man was left with the question he wanted to solve; did he have genuine saving faith? As a result, his insecurity was more likely to be increased than resolved.[1] Boston's own moroseness and repeated self-examination manifested that he continued to call into question whatever measure of assurance he felt.[2]

Boston's and Willison's teaching about assurance was not unique, though, and the rewards of assurance were added incentives to seek it. Their emphasis on the subject was that of seventeenth century Reformed ministers whom they respected.[3]

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VII, 319-21.

[2]Boston, Memoirs, passim. Dugald Buchanan's struggle for assurance was similar to Boston's. Dugald Buchanan, Diary (Edinburgh: William Whyte and Co., 1839), pp. 42, 64, 66-67, 73-74, 225-26.

[3]Boston's chain of duties and graces was inspired by The Marrow of Modern Divinity. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VII, 319-21. Many of the seventeenth century guides strongly recommended by Willison demanded self-examination to gain assurance of salvation. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 58. E.g., vide William Guthrie, The Christian's Great Interest (Glasgow: John Brown, 1755), p. 255. Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest (London: The Religious Tract Society, n.d.), pp. 146-67.

The search for assurance promoted concern for holiness. When assurance was found, it sustained Christians through life and in the face of death. It was highly valued when the Lord's Supper was observed, because only believers in close fellowship with the Lord were allowed to commune.[1] In comparison to the position of the above ministers, Erskine's view of assurance was more like that of Calvin.[2] Yet, his teaching was just as conducive, if not more so, to leading men into the good works of confident Christian living.

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[1]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 43, 91, 283, 336, 431-33. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 162-72, 493-514, 582-85.

[2]Erskine, Discourses, I, 293, 307-308, 313-14, 400, 458. Cf. Calvin, Institutes . . . (III.xiv.18-19; III.xx.10), II, 20-23, 105-106.

CHAPTER IV

THE PASTOR AS TEACHER

Introduction

By the time Thomas Boston began his ministry in 1699 the Scottish minister's responsibility to teach was of second importance only to his duty to preach. Apart from preaching pastors instructed people in the Christian faith and life chiefly by examining their knowledge of catechisms and by lecturing on the points summed up in them, a precedent established early in the Reformed tradition. They planned teaching activities outside of the pulpit primarily for young people, but adults were often included, especially in the limited instances when a minister led a religious society meeting. Through these means pastors intended to convey an understanding of truth basic to saving faith, to prepare youth and ignorant individuals for church membership and participation in the Lord's Supper, and to guide character development with moral principles derived from Scripture. Boston and John Willison not only used the standard guides of the Church for Christian education but wrote important

materials of their own, which were published and became widely used. The practice of pastoral instruction began to change in the last half of the century, but John Erskine supported methods which he felt were of proven value and encouraged the formation of Sunday Schools, of which many Churchmen were suspicious. Through following patterns of instruction established in the Scottish Reformed tradition, those three ministers made notable contributions to the understanding of Christian commitment.

The Importance of Pastoral Instruction

From the time of the Reformation attention was focused on the vital importance of teaching among pastoral tasks. In 1560 the First Book of Discipline proposed that where there was no parish school the minister or reader should teach children in the "first rudiments" of knowledge and especially in Calvin's Geneva Catechism.[1] An Act of 1570 set forth his additional obligation to examine the religious knowledge of all parishioners who had not previously been tested and were old enough

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[1]The Book of Discipline, as quoted in John Knox, The History of the Reformation of Religion in Scotland (London: Andrew Melrose, 1905), pp. 382-83. John Calvin's "Catechisme" was issued with The Book of Common Order for use in Scotland. Vide The Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1868), pp. 215-19.

to be instructed, i.e. about nine years old or older.[1] In the seventeenth century more specific directions were added to these guides. The year after approving the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms the General Assembly renewed an Act of 1639, which called for weekly catechizing in each parish and added the stipulation that ministers should present the chief heads of saving knowledge at every session. To insure that this task was given priority, the Assembly directed presbyteries to question ministers twice a year and to discipline those who did not comply with the act. The discipline consisted of admonition to teach faithfully after the first fault, a sharp rebuke after a second offense, and suspension for failure to amend after being rebuked.[2] Having directed kirk sessions in 1649 to see that every family had a copy of the Westminster Catechisms, the Assembly in 1652 suggested incentives for their use. Pastors were to explain part of the Shorter Catechism every Lord's Day before the whole congregation and to ask members, who were prepared to recite, to answer the questions. They were to see

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[1]Walter Steuart of Pardovan, Collections and Observations Methodiz'd; Concerning the Worship, Discipline, and Government of the Church of Scotland (Edinburgh: Andrew Anderson, 1709), pp. 110-111.

[2]The Principall Acts of the Solemne Generall Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland, 1649, Session of July 30 (Edinburgh: Evan Tyler, 1649), pp. 17-18.

that families and especially children were adequately instructed in the Catechism by visiting homes frequently and the parish school once a quarter.[1] Following the Revolution Settlement, Church courts renewed their concern for parish religious instruction. The General Assembly of 1696 recommended that lecturing on catechetical doctrine be added to the "ordinary work" of catechizing, but moderator George Meldrum observed in 1704 that ministers' response was limited.[2] There was a better response to the Act of 1706 that prescribed diligent instruction and examination of communicants before the Lord's Supper and the Act of 1708 that told pastors to inquire about religious teaching in families and to make roll books for parish examinations.[3] Pastoral faithfulness in teaching was stimulated by presbytery privy censures. Along with most other ministers in the first half of the century Thomas Boston in the Border country, John Willison in the city of Dundee, and John Erskine

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[1]The Principall Acts . . . , 1652, Session of August 2.

[2]The Principal Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1696, Act 18 (Edinburgh: George Mosman, 1696), p. 18. George Meldrum, A Sermon Preached before the Lord Ross, Her Majestie's Commissioner, and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland; 1704 (Edinburgh: George Mosman, 1704), p. 9.

[3]The Principal Acts . . . , 1706, Act 11. Ibid., 1708, Act 10, p. 18. The latter suggestion renewed a recommendation made in 1646 that ministers make rolls of parishes for examination. The Principall Acts . . . , 1646, Session 10. Steuart of Pardovan, Collections . . . , pp. 110-111.

in the capital of Edinburgh gave satisfactory answers to those inquiries about their catechizing and preaching of catechetical doctrine.[1] At parish visitations in the first quarter of the century presbyteries asked similar questions, by which they maintained emphasis on the pastor's role as a teacher.[2]

With pastors throughout the Christian tradition of the ministry Boston, Willison and Erskine freely endorsed this role. The first of those three distinguished between the offices of pastor and teacher in his exegesis of Ephesians 4:11-12, but he

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[1]Semi-annual privy censure was appointed by the General Assembly in 1694, in effect reviving the type of query called for in an act of 1649. The Principal Acts . . . , 1694, Act 17, p. 18; cf. The Principall Acts . . . , 1649, Session of July 30, pp. 17-18. Register of the Presbytery of Selkirk, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records, 327, Vol. IV, pp. 265-66. The Acts and Proceedings of the United Presbytries of Dundee and Forfar, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records, 103, Vol. VII, p. 38. A Register of the Acts and Proceedings of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records, 121, Vol. XI, pp. 205-206; Vol. XVII, pp. 333, 338.

[2]The Large Overtures of 1705 advised inquiring whether ministers taught from house to house, preached catechetic doctrine, and catechized frequently. The Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 1638-1842 (Edinburgh: The Edinburgh Printing and Publishing Company, 1843), p. 359. Archibald McNeill Houston, Auchterderran, Fife, A Parish History (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, Limited, 1924), pp. 352-55; Clement B. Gunn, The Book of the Stobo Church (Peebles: The Peebles Press, 1907), p. 83; Register of the Acts and Proceedings of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, IV, 28-34; V, 123-31; VI, 65-77, 274-80; VII, 329-36; VIII, 57-65, 77-89, 361-68; IX, 71-83, 458-72, 546-54; X, 200-211; XI, 68-73.

believed religious instruction in his parish was his duty.[1] The last of the three felt that Christ's injunction about feeding his lambs bound him "to nourish up children in the words of faith, and of sound doctrine." He warned ministers against offending God and men by neglecting to instruct the unlearned in the basic principles of Christianity.[2] Of those clergymen, however, the second did most to impress others that the Scriptures made teaching imperative. The example Jesus set in training his disciples, the inspired teaching of the apostles, and the practice of the early church confirmed that belief. His own faithful practice and the writing of four popular catechisms, which went through many editions, marked John Willison as one of the strongest advocates of catechizing during the century.[3] Other Evangelicals voiced similar convictions. In fact, one declared before the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, "The primary and essential, the summary and comprehensive character of our

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[1]Thomas Boston, The Whole Works of the Late Reverend Thomas Boston of Ettrick, ed. Samuel M'Millan (Aberdeen: George and Robert King, 1848), IV, 313.

[2]John Erskine, Discourses, I (Edinburgh: William Creech and Archibald Constable, 1798), 66-67, 109, 123.

[3]John Willison, The Practical Works of the Rev. John Willison (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1844), pp. ix, 442-727.

office, as derived from Christ himself, is to be Teachers of his holy religion."[1]

The Purposes of Pastoral Instruction

The primary purpose of teaching, as of all pastoral duties, was the conversion of souls. In order to be saved, men had to learn, to understand, and to accept the truth. Willison said, "There is no heaven without Christ, no interest in Christ without faith, and no faith without knowledge."[2] By knowledge he meant the acceptance of the gospel of Jesus Christ as true in all its aspects. Such intellectual assent was not equivalent to faith, but was "absolutely necessary to it as the foundation to the superstructure, and an excellent help to promote it; for the stronger our assent is to divine truth, the more lively will our saving faith be."[3] Fundamentally, his contemporary at

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[1]Robert Paton, The Main Duty of Bishops (Edinburgh: n.p., 1739), p. 3.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 599. Cf. We may know that Christ is not in us "if we are utterly ignorant of his person, natures, offices, and undertaking; if we never saw our absolute need of him, as the only Saviour; if we do not submit to his kingly government, as well as rely on the righteousness of his priesthood." James Oliphant, A Sacramental Catechism (9th ed.; Edinburgh: W. Coke, 1805), p. 43.

[3]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 501.

Ettrick shared that view,[1] but John Erskine practically equated assent with saving faith. To him faith essentially was an intellectual persuasion that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the living God, the Saviour of the world, and all that those titles implied. Education by itself did not produce saving faith, however. To be such, commitment of the mind had to be accompanied by spiritual recognition of the divine origin of the gospel, which inevitably involved the will and emotions.[2] Willison and Boston catechized in order to lay the groundwork for saving faith. Erskine stressed the inculcating of fundamental Christian doctrines, because he believed that they, "when seen in their native beauty, are the grand means of producing and increasing faith."[3] Thus, all three agreed that catechizing served an evangelistic purpose by implanting

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , II, 400-401. Cf. William Crawford, A Short Practical Catechism (Edinburgh: R. Fleming, 1745), Introduction, pp. 45, 143-44.

[2]John Erskine, Dissertation on the Nature of Christian Faith (Edinburgh: J. Ritchie, 1804), pp. 8, 36. Erskine, Discourses, I, 193, 420. Vide supra, pp. 164-67.

[3]Erskine, Dissertation . . . , p. 48. "Where the most essential and necessary articles of Christianity are inculcated, they will prove the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth." Erskine, Discourses, I, 105.

essential doctrines, which also prepared people to understand evangelistic preaching.[1]

Concern for salvation was especially dominant in the instruction given to first communicants and, in some cases, to young children. For example, A Sacramental Catechism was written by John Willison "to instruct the ignorant, in the knowledge of the gospel way and method of salvation, through the mediation and suretyship of Jesus Christ." To do that he explained "the covenants of works, of redemption, and of grace, with the seals thereof."[2] Boston also used a guide for non-communicants which discussed the meaning and sacramental expression of faith. After receiving instruction from him, each catechumen appeared before the kirk session

> to give proof of his knowledge of the principles of the Christian religion, and particularly of the nature, use, and the ends of the ordinance of the supper, by making

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[1]"Let us be diligent in instructing our people in the first principles of Christianity. . . . This is a most necessary part of our work: for, if the foundations of knowledge be not carefully laid among our people, our success must be marred, the best sermons will be lost upon them, if ignorance prevail among them." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 835. Cf. Erskine, Discourses, I, 123.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 443. Cf. Alexander Hamilton, A Short Catechism (Edinburgh: John Moncur, 1714), passim. Oliphant, A Sacramental Catechism, pp. 3-34. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 446-56, 577-78.

> a confession of his faith, either in the way of a continued discourse, or by answering questions thereupon proposed by the minister.[1]

The duty of teaching the basic elements of Christianity was not the minister's alone, however. With emotional vigour the author of The Mother's Catechism appealed,

> As you would not have your children . . . meeting you at God's tribunal with curses and imprecations against you; as you would not hear them shrieking in endless and easeless flames hereafter; be careful now to instruct them in the knowledge of the gospel way and method of salvation, through the mediation and suretyship of Jesus Christ.[2]

By enlisting the aid of parents pastors hoped their work of guiding children to make intelligent professions of faith would be more effective.

Appeals to accept Christ and warnings about the consequences of rejecting him, which were applied to children in their catechisms, were often similar to those made to adults.

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[1]Boston asked questions which could be answered "yes" or "no" by individuals who were "serious" but "weak." Boston, Memoirs, ed. George H. Morrison (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1899), p. 448.

[2]John Willison, The Mother's Catechism, for the Young Child (17th ed.; Edinburgh: Thomas Lumisden and John Robertson, 1743), p. 4; cf. pp. 2-3. "Were the bar of ignorance early removed out of the way, the destruction of many precious souls might be prevented." John Willison, The Young Communicant's Catechism (Edinburgh: Niddery's-wynd, 1734), p. ii; cf. pp. ii-iii. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 598. John Snodgrass, a successor of Willison at Dundee who published a revised edition of The Mother's Catechism in 1793, continued to urge parents to train their children "in the knowledge, and fear of the Lord." "Memoir of the Life and Character of the Rev. John Snodgrass, D.D., Minister of the Middle Church of Paisley," The Edinburgh

The Mother's Catechism spared no feelings in its charge,

> Do not think that justice will spare you, because you are young, if it find you Christless, prayerless, and living in sin: No, No; you may see graves of your length, and sculls of your size in the church-yard; and hell-fire will burn green trees, as well as old stocks. O then, would you be saved from hell, and be happy for ever? Flee from the devil and sin to Jesus Christ your Saviour.[1]

No wonder Dugald Buchanan had nightmares after receiving similar instruction when he was a boy![2] Pastors used the same techniques of persuasion for all ages partly because of their ignorance of good educational psychology, but mainly because commitment to Christ was an urgent matter. If children were not brought into the church when they were young, they might not enter at all, because a large percentage died before reaching adulthood.[3] Another possibility was that young people might become adults

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Christian Instructor, XXIX (August, 1830), 554-55.

[1]Willison, The Mother's Catechism, p. 6. "How do you know but that you may be the next child that may die? . . . Wilt thou tarry any longer, my dear child, before thou run into thy chamber, and beg of God to give thee Christ to thy soul, that thou mayest not be undone for ever?" John Gillies, Extracts from an Exhortation to the Inhabitants of the South Parish of Glasgow (Glasgow: Young, Gallie, & Company, 1819), p. 207.

[2]Dugald Buchanan, Diary (Edinburgh: William Whyte and Co., 1839), pp. 29, 30, 38-39.

[3]"O consider how many young people are hurried into eternity before they know and lay these things to heart!" Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 599. On the high rate of child mortality in the eighteenth century vide infra, pp. 245-48.

hardened in sin before they considered the claims of Christ. Willison urged ministers to evangelize youth, because

> this is the most usual season of conversion, the time when the heart is soonest melted, and the affections are the most pliable; and if ever we prevail with sinners, youth is the most likely time for it.[1]

A second purpose of religious training was to prepare novices for the Lord's Supper, which was regarded as the most solemn and meaningful worship experience of the church. Many pastors believed that sacrament was "the epitome of the whole Christian religion, both as to doctrine and practice."[2] For those who understood it in terms of the seal of God's covenant of grace, thanksgiving for Christ's atoning sacrifice, and renewal of faith for Christian living, the benefits were great. A pastor of Dundee declared,

> Hereby the remission of our sins through Christ's blood is assured, the power of sin is weakened, the graces of the Spirit are strengthened, the soul's diseases are cured, the doubts of the mind are resolved, and sweet views of Christ and glory are obtained.[3]

By the eighteenth century the celebration of the Lord's Supper had become a high point of public worship. The "Sacramental Season," a period of services from Thursday of one week

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 835.

[2]Ibid., p. 442.

[3]Ibid., p. 581.

to the following Monday, was common. This custom developed in the seventeenth century and was associated with Covenanter field preaching. Several ministers assisted the parish pastor in preparatory preaching, serving relays of communicants at a table on Sunday, and leading concluding services of thanksgiving. The additional ministry of the Word plus the sacrament attracted visitors from surrounding parishes. Instruction from an ample course of sermons, fellowship with other believers, and the solemn ritual of communicating made an "Occasion" a spiritually rewarding experience not only for the portion that communed but also for many who refrained from approaching the Lord's Table.[1] Even though few parishes celebrated the Lord's Supper more than once a year, many individuals travelled to nearby parishes in order to communicate several times each year. Diaries and memoirs confirm the observation that there were

> many serious exercised Christians, who communicate almost every Sabbath during the summer season, when they can have the occasion in neighbouring congregations, who can tell

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[1]Steuart of Pardovan, Collections . . . , pp. 140-42. George Wemyss, "Preface," John Spalding, Synaxis Sacra (Edinburgh: Andrew Anderson, 1703). Boston, Memoirs, pp. 243-44, 380, 466. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 131, 309-49. Henry Moncrieff Wellwood, Account of the Life and Writings of John Erskine (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Company, 1818), p. 148. John Macinnes, The Evangelical Movement in the Highlands of Scotland 1688-1800 (Aberdeen: The University Press, 1951), pp. 5, 99-101.

> us that they reap spiritual advantage by so doing, that their esteem of the ordinance is much increased.[1]

This veneration of the sacrament included not only awe of its spiritual significance but fear of its abuse. Before the Westminster Directory for Public Worship directed that "the ignorant and the scandalous are not fit to receive this sacrament," the Book of Common Worship prescribed that such persons be barred from the Lord's table.[2] From 1 Corinthians 11:27-30 Scotsmen reasoned that misuse of communion made a man

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[1]Willison advised Christians to follow this practice. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 130, 154. Those who did this included: Boston, Memoirs, p. 27. Elizabeth Blackader, A Short Account of the Lord's Way of Providence Toward Me in My Pilgrimage Journey, National Library of Scotland MSS, pp. 16, 17. Robert Wodrow, Analecta, IV (Edinburgh: for the Maitland Club, 1843), 4. R. B., Diary, copied by her husband George Drummond, Diary, Vol. I, University of Edinburgh Library MS. George Brown, Diary, 1745-1753 (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable, 1856), pp. 96, 145, 165, 192, 246. Six ministers assisted John Erskine during the Kirkintilloch sacramental season in May, 1746. Ibid., pp. 144-46. John Brown, Practical Piety Exemplified in the Lives of Thirteen Eminent Christians (Glasgow: John Bryce, 1783), pp. 11, 91-116.

[2]The Book of Common Order . . . , pp. 122-23. Robert Baille wrote that it was first required of communicants "that they have a good measure of knowledge, and profess to believe the truth; secondly, that in their life and conversation they be without scandal, and thirdly that they be submissive to the discipline of the Church." Robert Baillie, Dissuasive, p. 22, quoted by Andrew Edgar, Old Church Life in Scotland (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1885), p. 162. "The Directory for Publick Worship," The Confession of Faith (Glasgow: William Duncan, 1753), p. 491. Steuart of Pardovan, Collections . . . , pp. 132, 138.

guilty of Jesus' murder, liable to eternal judgment, and exposed to God's affliction on earth. Unworthy participation could be due to sin and an unrepentant spirit, a lack of reverence for God and the sacrament, or failure to communicate with right motives.[1] To prevent abuse, the pastor of Simprin and Ettrick in the first decade of the 1700's delayed administering the sacrament for a few years in each parish until he had prepared his people.[2] Thereafter, he required that non-communicants notify him in advance if they wished to partake.[3] In 1720 the author of A Sacramental Catechism warned his readers against

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[1]"Unworthy communicating . . . is to partake without due preparation and right ends, to eat and drink without suitable knowledge and reverence, without reconciliation to God and our neighbour, or without the exercise of the sacramental graces, such as faith, love, and repentance; or to approach while we entertain any known sin." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 581; cf. pp. 158, 480.

[2]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 163, 174-75, 243. Later the Simprin Kirk Session moderated by Boston unanimously moved to administer communion more than once a year whenever possible. Simprin Kirk Session Minutes, 1699-1715, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 346, Vol. I, pp. 138-39. Other pastors also delayed this sacrament. E.g. Daniel Beaton described by John Noble, Religious Life in Ross (Inverness: The Northern Counties Newspaper and Printing and Publishing Company, Ltd., 1909), pp. 180-81. John Mill, Diary, ed. Gilbert Goudie (Edinburgh: at the University Press, 1889), p. 13.

[3]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 487-89. Simprin Kirk Session Minutes, 19 July 1702, I, 92. Boston "debarred" some from the communion table for "gross ignorance." Simprin Kirk Session Minutes, 27 January 1705, I, 134.

jeopardizing their souls by partaking of the elements without knowing what they were doing. Like Boston he advocated personal examination by the pastor to ascertain each parishioner's understanding of the Lord's Supper, and, in particular, the readiness of first communicants.[1] The exclusiveness of communicant membership in the Church was made clear in communion services by the minister's "fencing the tables." That final verbal challenge to men's consciences prohibited several classes of sinners from communing. Influenced by acts of the Synod of Angus and Mearns passed in response to overtures from his presbytery, John Willison barred the unregenerate, the unprepared, and the unrepentant.[2] He did this in order to prevent blasphemy and irreverence, profanation of the sacrament, and incurrence of guilt and judgment.[3]

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 442-43.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 479-80, 582. That synod stipulated barring on the grounds of swearing, drunkenness, lying, Sabbath breaking, obstinate rejection of Church discipline, and similar sins. The Register of the Provincial Synod of Angus & Mearns, 1711-1715, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 12, Vol. III, pp. 34-35.

[3]Promiscuous admission to the Lord's Table was to be prevented "that that holy sacrament may be purely administred, that which is holy may not be given to dogs, the wicked may not be hardened in their sin, but discouraged therin, Satan's kingdome brought down, and none (but who in the judgment of charity) and as far as man can perceive are friends may come to our Lord's table, to whom only the feast belongs, and that which obstructs

High standards required thorough instruction to qualify parishioners for admission to the sacrament. The General Assembly in 1706 advised all ministers

> diligently to instruct persons, especially before their admission to the Lord's Supper, particularly as to the covenant of grace, and the nature and end of this ordinance as a seal thereof; and charge, upon their consciences, the obligations they lie under from their baptismal covenant, and seriously to exhort them to renew the same.[1]

John Willison commended and followed that recommendation, because he believed that intelligent and sincere communicating meant the difference between laying a sound foundation for salvation and becoming subject to God's wrath.[2] Along with Thomas Boston he taught catechumens the meaning of commitment to Christ

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the successe of the Gospell so much and stumbles tender Christians may be removed." The Acts and Proceedings of the United Presbytries of Dundee and Forfar, 1710-1715, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 103, Vol. VII, pp. 68-69. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , 479-80. From this practice arose the problem of sincere believers refusing to participate for fear of judgment. Willison had to remind men of the Christian's duty to communicate. Ibid., pp. 142-50.

[1]The Principal Acts . . . , 1706, Act 11. The "Large Overtures" of 1705 said, "Seeing none should be admitted to the Lord's Table who are ignorant or scandalous, therefore, they are to be prepared for it by catechising, and instruction in the principles of religion in their younger years; before the first admission of any to partake thereof, the ministers should inquire into and take trial of their knowledge of the principles of the Christian religion, and, particularly, of the nature, uses, and ends, of this ordinance of the Supper." Acts of the General Assembly . . . , 1638-1842, pp. 343-44.

[2]"Seeing there is so much at stake with young communicants at their first approach it is incumbent upon ministers to take

in terms of God's covenant of grace, stressed the significance of communion in relation to that covenant, and outlined the self-examination basic to proper preparation, since even Christians could partake unworthily if they harboured any known sin or lacked the proper attitude.[1] As author of two sacramental catechisms and a sacramental directory, he suggested a pattern of worship that fulfilled the ideal of worthy participation.[2]

Willison's devotional instruction came to a climax with the instruction of communicants. In The Mother's Catechism he

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more pains upon them than others, according to recommendation of the General Assembly, 1706." Willison, The Young Communicant's Catechism, pp. iv, v; cf. The Practical Works . . . , pp. 442-43.

[1]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 487-89. On self-examination vide The Whole Works . . . , XI, 341-93. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 443, 479, 481, 483, 580-81, 710.

[2]Communicants were to meditate at the beginning of communion services on the evil of sin, the goodness of God, the love of Christ, the value of the soul, the excellence of redemption, and, especially, the sufferings of Christ. At the same time they were to pray for pardon of their sins, for aid to prepare their hearts, for grace to partake worthily, for God's presence, for communion with Christ, and for God's blessings. When partaking of the elements, they were supposed to think on the solemnity of the ordinance, to meditate on the unsearchable love of Christ shown in his life and sacrifice for sin, to recommit themselves in faith to God for forgiveness, to repent for past sins, to desire the efficacy of Christ's blood for their souls, to exercise love and joy in God, to covenant with God, to vow in the strength of Christ to avoid all sin and to perform all Christian duties, and to request grace to pay their vows and to progress in sanctification. After communicating came self-examination for evidence of genuine communion with God, appropriate praise, and prayer. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 515, 517-23, 586-88.

published some prayers, including a short paraphrase on the Lord's Prayer, which children could use until learning to pray in their own words. Although the prayers were generally long and were limited primarily to themes of confession, improving Christian virtues, and preparation for death, the author conveyed the meaning of intercession and employed well his gift of quoting Scripture in prayers.[1] Through his exposition of the Shorter Catechism's study of the Lord's Prayer, Willison presented additional worship aids. By such instruction he hoped to lead his parishioners into a mature understanding and expression of Christian faith.[2]

In training people for communicant membership, Boston and Willison were continuing a pastoral task regarded as basic from the time of the early church, although the Reformation did much to renew and emphasize the practice. Eighteenth century Evangelicals maintained that understanding had to precede profession of faith and admission to communion. Near the end of the century John Smith, whose attitudes were similar in many respects to those of John Erskine, repeated that concept. He asserted that instruction was necessary to prepare persons to accept their parents' baptismal vows for themselves, renew

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[1]Willison, The Mother's Catechism, pp. 4, 6, 29-34.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 594, 598, 835. Cf. Crawford, A Short Practical Catechism, Introduction.

"their engagements" at the Lord's Supper, and build a foundation for faith that would keep it from relapsing through ignorance in latter years.[1] Pastors like Boston and Willison perpetuated catechizing, a method extolled by the Reformers, but in their reliance on the Westminster Catechisms and covenant theology departed somewhat from the patterns of Reformation teaching. They limited themselves to scholastic patterns in which man's appropriation of salvation outweighed the person and work of Jesus Christ as the central feature of Christianity. The omission of biblical history and limited teaching about prayer, Bible study, and worship were other significant weaknesses. Yet, their explanation of man's relation to God through Christ in the covenant of grace tended to be biblically valid, and their teaching about communion inspired some helpful devotional habits.

A third objective of pastoral instruction was the development of Christian character. The acceptance of basic doctrines and the development of a conscience guided by the Moral Law were associated with good character. Specific treatment of principles of behaviour, thus, was restricted largely to

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[1]John Smith, Lectures on the Nature and End of the Sacred Office (Glasgow: at the University Press, 1798), p. 240.

explanations of the ten commandments.[1] Since such teaching was usually influenced by the study of the decalogue of the Westminster Catechisms, Evangelicals had a tendency to moralize, as Willison did when he advised children.

> Hearken to their [ministers' and parents'] counsels, and not to the Devil's temptations. Shun the company of all swearing, lying, and wicked children; and delight in the company of those that are piously inclined. Beware of cards and dice, and other such bewitching games. Especially, I intreat you to remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy: Take heed to your thoughts, words and actions, and attend to sermons carefully this day: Be ready to give some account to your parents at night of what you heard in the day, and to answer the questions of the Catechism. O honour and obey your parents![2]

The general methods of applying the commandments were exemplified by William Crawford's rules, which were to some extent developments of principles used by John Calvin. Crawford suggested that Christians should deduce from each commandment something required and something forbidden, recognize the requirement of

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , II, 59-383. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 657-90; The Mother's Catechism, pp. 5-6. Crawford, A Short Practical Catechism, pp. 63-139.

[2]John Willison, The Mother's Catechism, pp. 5-6. Cf. "Whither do you think those children go when they die, that will not do what they are bid, but lie, and speak naughty words, and break the Sabbath? . . . They who lie, must go to their Father the devil, unto everlasting burning. . . . Take heed of what you know to be ill. . . . Do what your father and mother bids you cheerfully, and take heed of doing anything that they forbid you. Be diligent in reading the Scripture, and learning your catechism." Gillies, Extracts . . . , pp. 206, 208.

both good motives and good actions to keep the commandments, consider that each required all similar duties or prohibited all similar faults, and obey the whole moral law.[1] Similar rules of interpretation were used by other Evangelical pastors in their teaching and when they used the ten commandments to guide self-examination and confession.[2]

Principles of Pastoral Instruction

In catechizing pastors employed many sound educational principles, although they did not apply all of them equally well.[3] First, they generally adapted instruction to the capacities of learners. John Willison and James Oliphant wrote Mother's Catechisms to teach young children Bible facts and to prepare them for more advanced catechisms. Willison rewrote

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[1]Crawford, A Short Practical Catechism, pp. 68-77. John Calvin proposed that the ten commandments required internal spiritual righteousness and external obedience in life, commanded the contrary duties and prohibited the opposite evils, and demanded worship and fear of God as well as the practice of duties to men. Institutes of the Christian Religion (II.viii.6-12), trans. John Allen (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936), I, 401-408.

[2]Boston, Memoirs, p. 429; The Whole Works . . . , II, 204-259. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 494, 657-690. Cf. Crawford, A Short Practical Catechism, pp. 63-139.

[3]The basis of the following discussion of eighteenth century teaching is formed by principles named by Thomas F. Torrance. The School of Faith (London: James Clarke & Co. Limited, 1959), xxiv-xxxi.

his work so it would suit them better, and in another manual varied his directions for learners of different abilities to memorize.[1] The simplifying of questions by John Gillies and John Smith exemplified Henry Moncrieff's statement that several ministers gave instruction in "every subject of religion and morals, which . . . was best adapted to their parishioners' capacities and situations."[2] The Shorter Catechism, which was a part of the Church's standards, did not cater for children's capacities, so simplification of its content became necessary.[3] At least six catechisms supplementing the Shorter Catechism and some commentaries on it were published during the eighteenth century. The most prominent of those expositions which became standard works were written by Willison and Boston.[4] On the

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[1]Willison, The Mother's Catechism; The Practical Works . . . , pp. 598-99. James Oliphant, The Mother's Catechism (5th ed.; Glasgow: James Duncan, 1785).

[2]John Gillies, The Shorter Catechism Divided (Glasgow: John Orr, n.d.). Smith, Lectures . . . , pp. 245-46. Moncrieff Wellwood, . . . John Erskine, pp. 71-72.

[3]S. W. Carruthers pointed out that the Shorter Catechism was meant to be "a directory for catechising" as well as something for children to learn. Three Centuries of the Westminster Shorter Catechism (Fredericton, N.B.: The University of New Brunswick, 1957), p. 7. Cf. Philip Schaff, History of the Creeds of Christendom (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1877), pp. 785-86.

[4]Boston, "A Brief Explication of the First Part of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism," The Whole Works . . . , VII, 9-149. Willison, "An Example of Plain Catechising on the

foundations of such teaching aids other catechisms were written to explain the significance of the sacraments and Christian commitment.[1]

Teaching catechumens to ask the right questions within the framework of their theology was a second principle catechisms of the period fulfilled. This was especially true of the sacramental catechisms, which fully developed the doctrines stressed within the federal system of theology. The catechetical method of memorizing answers to given questions also enabled children to learn important material which they could grow to understand later. Although this appears on the surface to be a limiting factor, it actually increased effectiveness, because in education information must be provided which will enable the learner to develop his thinking. Professor Torrance noted that

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Assembly's Shorter Catechism," The Practical Works . . . , pp. 593-727. Crawford, A Short Practical Catechism. Alexander Mair, A Brief Explication of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism (New ed.; Montrose: Smith & Co., 1837). Robert Rutherford, A Scripture Catechism: or Questions on the Assembly's Shorter Catechism (Kelso: James Palmer, 1794). Gillies, The Shorter Catechism Divided. Daniel Campbell, Man's Chief End and Rule. Carruthers, Three Centuries . . . , p. 10.

[1]John Willison, A Sacramental Catechism (Glasgow: David Niven, 1794); The Young Communicant's Catechism. Alexander Hamilton, A Short Catechism, Concerning the Three Special Divine Covenants, and Two Sacraments (Edinburgh: John Moncur, 1714). Oliphant, A Sacramental Catechism. John Gillies, A Catechism Upon the Sufferings of the Redeemer (Glasgow: John Orr, 1763).

the catechetic use of the Shorter Catechism, which dominated eighteenth century Church teaching, supplied such information. Having been given material beyond his grasp, the child had something to think about when he was developing in mental and spiritual capacities.[1]

A fourth important principle involved presenting elements of the Christian faith which would help people to grasp the teaching of Scripture. Here the Shorter Catechism fell short in the areas of the history of redemption, the life of Christ, and the doctrines of the church and the Holy Spirit.[2] Besides William Dalrymple, a Moderate minister in Ayr during the age of Robert Burns, only three writers included biblical history in teaching manuals of the century.[3] Willison and Oliphant touched on significant Old and New Testament facts in their Mother's Catechisms, and Gillies outlined the events of Christ's passion. Apart from those few books such information was supplied only as pastors used biblical illustrations in preaching or asked supplementary questions in catechizing. According to Erskine's

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[1]Torrance, The School of Faith, p. xxviii.

[2]Ibid., p. xlii.

[3]William Dalrymple, Two Scripture Catechisms (Kilmarnock: J. Wilson, 1788). Willison, The Mother's Catechism . . . . James Oliphant, The Mother's Catechism. Gillies, A Catechism Upon the Sufferings of the Redeemer.

biographer, some in their catechesis did cover biblical history, doctrines, and principles of conduct not presented in the Shorter Catechism. Both Erskine and he believed that a pastor should make his people well acquainted with the Scriptures and accustomed to refer to them frequently.[1] Near the end of the century George Hill noted the omission of biblical and church history in the Shorter Catechism and recommended the use of Dr. Watt's historical catechisms to supply that defect.[2] A fifth point of value in the educational process was that instruction took place in social groups, which fostered Christian fellowship and mutual edification. Pastors usually examined several families in one place or they gathered children in communicants' classes. People were encouraged to learn, because others shared in the same learning experience; but, more important, they were enabled to learn, because their instruction

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[1]Moncrieff Wellwood, . . . John Erskine, pp. 71-72.

[2]George Hill, Theological Institutes (Edinburgh: Bell & Bradfute, 1803), p. 396. In 1736 an anonymous author criticized the Shorter Catechism's omission of the doctrines of the church, kingdom of heaven, two covenants, new commandment of love and self-denial; its omission of descriptions of pure religion in James, repentance according to John the Baptist, and the character of Jesus Christ; and its treatment of the ten commandments and the ordinances of worship. He contended that the Bible should be the only text for religious instruction. The Usefulness of Catechisms Considered (Edinburgh: W. Miller, 1736), pp. 11-12, 14-15, 18-22.

involved interaction of minds in the environment of personal relationships that is necessary for comprehension and growth of knowledge.

Several principles peculiar to Christian education in every age were also applied. Conversion was the primary goal, as it must be in all presentation of Christian truth. For that end Boston and Willison required a response of self criticism and repentance on the part of the learner, inasmuch as they directed him to confess his sinfulness, renounce evil, and pray for God's forgiveness. Renewal in attitude and behaviour as part of the spiritual maturing of catechumens was also sought by those pastors through their teaching about moral conduct and worship, but they chiefly devoted their attention to man's predicament and God's plan for deliverance. In focusing attention on man they tended to neglect the historic person of Jesus Christ. They did not fail entirely to confront each student with the person of Christ, however, because they presented the Reformed teaching about the Saviour's work as prophet, priest and king. The greatest shortcoming was that pastors often failed in what Thomas F. Torrance has called "the demonstration of the Spirit." By ignoring the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and by trying to mould the mind of the learner through indoctrination, they failed to keep in perspective the role of the

Holy Spirit in the apprehension of Christian truth.[1] On the whole, however, pastors, of whom Boston, Willison and Erskine were representative, were effective in their communication of Christian knowledge.

Methods of Pastoral Instruction

Catechizing was the most widespread and highly regarded form of instruction in the Church of Scotland throughout the eighteenth century. General agreement that this was the best way to instill knowledge in students' minds gave rise not only to religious catechisms, but also to historical and scientific catechisms.[2] Although proof texts were quoted to show that

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[1]Torrance, The School of Faith, pp. xxxii-xl.

[2]"The catechetical way of instructing, is the most speedy and successful method of conveying the knowledge of divine things." W. Bain, The Family Instructor (Glasgow: David Niven, 1788), p. v. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 445, 593, 835. Erskine, Discourses, I, 123-24. Smith, Lectures . . . , pp. 240, 243. On catechizing at the beginning, middle and end of the century vide: Walter Steuart of Pardovan, Collections . . . , p. 108. Donald Sage, Memorabilia Domestica (Wick: W. Rae, 1889), p. 115. "Review of A Catechism on Baptism by a Minister of the Church of Scotland." The Edinburgh Christian Instructor, III (August, 1811), 127. George Robertson described "Sabbath" afternoon catechizing from "the Mother's Catechism or other question books" as typical of Cottar piety about 1765. "Rural Recollections," J. G. Fyfe (ed.), Scottish Diaries and Memoirs, 1746-1843 (Stirling: Eneas Mackay, 1942), pp. 274-75.

catechizing was the proper way to teach the first principles of Christianity, the results of experience counted most in establishing this method. Young children who had little or no schooling could memorize answers to set questions, and pastors declared the opinion that the earlier the training the more permanent and lasting the results.[1] For illiterate adults, of whom there were many,[2] catechesis made it possible to hold fast in an ordered form much that they would forget from sermons. Another benefit was the pastor's becoming intimately acquainted with his people. Also, parents and other helpers could be enlisted as assistants in the teaching process, since they could ask the questions and rehearse answers. The minister was then released to test and explain what had been learned.

Recognizing that memorization was no substitute for understanding, pastors did not limit catechizing to the hearing of

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , II, 225. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 599.

[2]The widespread illiteracy of the early eighteenth century was described by: Andrew Edgar, Old Church Life in Scotland, II (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1886), pp. 116-18. Henry Grey Graham, The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1901), pp. 420-24. Cf. On March 4, 1705 the Simprin Kirk Session moderated by Thomas Boston offered to pay the schoolmaster to teach in their homes members of the congregation who desired to learn to read but could not "conveniently" go to school. Simprin Kirk Session Minutes, 1699-1715, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 346, Vol. I, p. 143.

recitations. They stressed word for word repetition of only important things. For example, in compliance with Scottish Reformed teaching Willison named the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and the Shorter Catechism as the basic articles which children should memorize.[1] He condensed the content and answers in one catechism eighteen years after it first appeared, because it had been "too burdensome to the memory."[2]

Supplementary questions were used to draw out understanding of a catechism's answer. Willison, Crawford, and others left examples of such queries in books which explained the Shorter Catechism.[3] Basically, they inquired about the meaning of words and phrases and asked questions requiring answers of a sentence, a yes or no, or a mixture of yes or no

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[1]Willison, The Mother's Catechism, p. 5.

[2]Willison, The Young Communicant's Catechism, p. ii. He suggested that the additional questions in "An Example of Plain Catechising" be usually read, and that only children with very good memories should attempt to learn them by heart. The Practical Works . . . , p. 599.

[3]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 593-727. Crawford, A Short Practical Catechism. Mair, A Brief Explication . . . . Rutherford, A Scripture Catechism. Alexander Gerard taught, "A minister's chief care therefore ought to be, to bring them, not to repeat, but to understand the catechism. . . . Answering to the questions of a catechism should not be made a mere exercise of memory; . . . It should be made, as much as possible, an exercise of judgment." The Pastoral Care (London: T. Cadell Jun. and W. Davies, 1799), p. 219.

with a statement of fact. At times definitions and scriptural "proofs" were requested and in a few instances the Catechism question was re-phrased. These various approaches were used in Willison's treatment of the first question of the Shorter Catechism. He asked:

> Q. What do we mean by man's chief end?
> A. The main thing which a man should intend and aim at in his living in the world, and look upon as the great design of his creation.
> Q. What is that great and chief end?
> A. In the answer it is branched out into two parts, the principal end being to glorify God, and the less principal to enjoy him for ever.
> Q. Can man add any thing to God's essential glory?
> A. No; for that being infinite, no addition can be made to it.
> Q. How then can we glorify God?
> A. By declaring and showing forth his glory before the world.
> Q. How may we do that?
> A. By acknowledging God's perfections; by adoring and trusting in him; by praising him with our lips, and ordering our conversation according to his word.[1]

One question led to another with the ensuing result being quite lengthy supplementary catechisms.[2] Willison meant his work to be an example of catechizing, but he recommended that families ask his questions after the related answer in the Shorter Catechism had been quoted. If a person could not repeat the answer to Willison's question, he was to read it or give it in his own

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 599.

[2]Willison's work covered 135 double columned pages; Crawford's "short" catechism filled 186 pages.

words. Individuals actually demonstrated a better grasp of what they learned when they could rephrase the content in their own words. When examining their parishioners, pastors unconsciously observed this rule of learning. They asked their own questions, which required a person to think out his own answers. A contemporary of John Erskine pointed out that, in order to accomplish the most good, a man should prepare extra questions in the simplest form and ask for no unimportant or minute information.[1]

A second aid to understanding was the reading or quoting of the scriptural proof texts. Willison advised this and inserted Biblical statements into his supplementary answers.[2] John Gillies developed a third help. He advised catechumens to break down each question of the Shorter Catechism into the headings suggested by its natural divisions. This learning device made the pupil think through the answer he memorized. Gillies' examples of outlined questions usually contained from two to four points, but some had more divisions, an additional

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 599. Cf. Professor Smith's statement, "Make every one answer in his own plain and familiar language." Smith, Lectures . . . , p. 246.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 599. Crawford quoted Scripture. Rutherford sometimes paraphrased Scripture and supplied references of proof texts. Mair frequently gave references but seldom quoted Scripture.

task for the memory.[1] At oral examinations ministers also elucidated the meaning of various questions. Many favoured the limiting of such commentaries to repeated explanations of important points. Boston's explication of the first thirty-eight questions of the Shorter Catechism is an example of such repetitive comment. Although his commentary was too long to serve as a form of examination, he drew upon it when he catechized.[2]

The manner in which instruction was given was also considered to be important. A pastor from Dundee expected children to memorize answers of the Shorter Catechism, but he did not expect them to memorize too much at one time and he made allowances for varying abilities.[3] Since an examination could be trying for the timid or unprepared, John Erskine reminded clergymen to be teachers rather than judges. By being conciliatory and friendly, avoiding harshness, asking only what a person should be expected to answer, and preventing the embarrassment

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[1]Gillies, The Shorter Catechism Divided, pp. 1, 21. Cf. Smith, Lectures . . . , p. 239.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VII, 9-149. Memoirs, p. 404.

[3]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 598-99, 835.

of anyone unable to reply, the pastor could make catechizing a privilege instead of a chore.[1]

The Practice of Pastoral Instruction

Catechizing

Catechizing was conducted at regular intervals by Church of Scotland ministers. In 1639 the General Assembly advised them to catechize a different part of each parish every week rather than put off examining the people until a short time before communion.[2] By the early 1700's the common practice was to conduct annual examinations during the winter months.[3]

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[1]"Haughty looks, or an angry tone, may increase their aversion to what is serious, and make them eager to get rid of us; but an insinuating and agreeable manner, may gain their esteem and affection, and make religion appear to them venerable and lovely. . . . For doing all this, prudence, gravity, condescension, meekness, patience, are requisite. Perhaps, all things weighed, it is more difficult to catechise, than to preach well." Erskine, Discourses, I, 123-24. Smith, Lectures . . . , pp. 240, 246.

[2]The Principalle Acts of the Solemne Generall Assembly, 1639, Session 23 (Edinburgh: Andrew Hart, 1639), p. 13.

[3]Vide John Anderson, Diary, University of Edinburgh, New College Library MS, pp. 25-31. (Transcript) John Brand, Memoirs, National Library of Scotland MSS, 1668, p. 51. George Ridpath, Diary, ed. James Balfour Paul (Edinburgh: at the University Press, 1922), pp. 112-20. James Calder, Diary, ed. William Taylor (Stirling: Peter Drummond, 1875), pp. 58-59. At Essil from 11 October, 1731 until 16 August, 1732 the minister conducted thirty-eight diets of catechizing on week days and twenty diets on Lord's days. William Cramond, The Church of Speymouth (Elgin: The "Courant and Courier" Office, 1890), p. 49.

Thomas Boston was one of the few that went around his parish twice between October and May doing this. In addition he tried to examine each communicant prior to communion seasons.[1] Some rural ministers, however, did well to catechize families once each year, since they had to spend several consecutive days away from home in order to reach remote and almost inaccessible parts of their parishes.[2] Each pastor formulated his own pattern of leading two to four hour sessions of instruction in pre-arranged meeting places.[3] Most of these diets were opened

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[1]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 227-28, 243. Cf. George Turnbull, Diary, ed. Robert Paul, Miscellany of the Scottish History Society, Vol. I (Edinburgh: The Scottish History Society, 1893), pp. 411, 430.

[2]David Hogg, Life and Times of the Rev. John Wightman, D.D. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1873), p. 107. John Mackay was absent from home as long as three months when he catechized the wild parish of Durness from 1707 to 1714. Sage, Memorabilia Domestica, p. 9.

[3]Boston notified people in a given area in advance of a specified session. He often catechized working men on Sunday evenings. When he taught them during a week-day afternoon rest hour, he met the women of the area at another hour of the day. Simprin Kirk Session Minutes MSS, I, 49-51. Boston, Memoirs, 109-110, 227-28, 435-38, 452-54. Cf. Anderson, Diary, pp. 25-31. Calder, Diary, pp. 58-59. Hogg, . . . John Wightman, pp. 104-105. Smith, Lectures . . . , pp. 246-47. In 1730 Edinburgh Presbytery set down rules for catechizing which involved public intimation preceding each diet of examination, compelling members to attend the diets, and stressing the benefits of catechizing. A Register of the Acts and Proceedings of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 121, Vol. XII, pp. 318-19.

and closed with prayer and, frequently, praises were also sung and the Scriptures read. John Kennedy described such a meeting in the Highlands.

> On Tuesday and Wednesday, during winter and spring, the minister "holds diets of catechising." The residents in a certain district are gathered into one place--the church, a school, or a barn--and after praise, prayer, and an exposition of one of the questions of the Shorter Catechism in course, each person, from the district for the day, is minutely and searchingly examined. All attend and all are catechised. Each individual conscience is thus reached by the truth, the exact amount of knowledge possessed by each of his hearers, as well as his state of feeling, ascertained by the minister, a clear knowledge of the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel communicated, and valuable materials gathered for the work of the pulpit.[1]

In an "examination" the pastor tested the knowledge which his parishioners gained through family catechizing and from his pulpit lectures on the Catechism. A good test became a good learning device as individuals heard their neighbours' explanations of memorized answers and their minister's corrections and comments.[2]

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[1]John Kennedy, The Days of the Fathers in Ross-Shire (Inverness: "Northern Chronicle" Office, 1897), p. 123. Cf. Hogg, . . . John Wightman, pp. 104-105.

[2]Boston bore down on the doctrine of total depravity after finding that the people of Simprin were ignorant about God and themselves. His examinations brought results. "Having inculcated almost on each of them their wretched state by nature, and they frequently attending the means of instruction, there were but few examined that day who did not shew some knowledge of that point." Boston, Memoirs, p. 112.

During the eighteenth century several pastors gave catechetical instruction on Sundays, a practice in Scotland which dated back to the sixteenth century. The First Book of Discipline required that on Sunday

> after noon the young children must be publicly examined in their catechism in audience of the people, and in doing this the minister must take great diligence, to cause the people to understand the questions proponed, as well as the answers, and the doctrine that may be collected thereof.[1]

By that requirement Knox was introducing Calvin's practice of Sunday catechizing into Scotland. The catechism referred to was Calvin's Geneva Catechism, which was divided into sections to be covered on successive Sundays.[2] In 1652 the General Assembly put into effect recommendations of the Westminster Directory for Public Worship that ministers explain part of the Shorter Catechism each Sunday and ask parishioners, who were prepared, to recite answers to its questions.[3] In the 1700's Sunday teaching was the result of a pastor's initiative rather than the Assembly's directive, however. Recalling the customs

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[1]Knox, The History of the Reformation . . . , p. 405.

[2]The Book of Common Order . . . , pp. 217-19. Andrew Edgar noted that church records from the sixteenth century show that Knox's directive was carried out. Edgar, Old Church Life, I, 58-59, 91-93.

[3]The Confession of Faith, p. 494. Carruthers, Three Centuries . . . , pp. 7-8. The Principalle Acts . . . , 1652.

of their predecessors, Thomas Boston and John Willison had young people repeat parts of the Shorter Catechism in church for the edification of assembled congregations.[1] The Presbytery of Ayr also revived this practice in 1747, when it recommended

> that the ancient and good custom of repeating the catechism in church on the Lord's day, before sermon in the forenoon, and betwixt sermons, (that is as the reader's or schoolmaster's service), be continued and that a portion of holy scripture be read, after repeating the catechism.[2]

Near the end of the century one minister described his parish's long established practice of employing scholars in the summer to read publicly portions of the Old and the New Testament and to answer questions of the Catechism between morning and afternoon services. This was so far from a general practice by that time that he felt it merited attention.[3] Though recitation before the congregation was uncommon, quite a few ministers did hold Sunday sessions of catechesis for children. In many cases

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[1]Simprin Kirk Session Minutes, June 22 and July 6, 1701, I, 35, 37. Walter William Coates, A Short History of Brechin Cathedral, p. 51, referred to by Webb Pomeroy, "John Willison of Dundee" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Library, University of Edinburgh), p. 22.

[2]Edgar, Old Church Life in Scotland, II, 122-23; cf. I, 91-92.

[3]James Scott, "Parish of Auchterhouse," The Statistical Account of Scotland, ed. John Sinclair, XIV (Edinburgh: William Creech, 1795), 523-24.

this work was then continued through the last years of the century in what became popularly known as the Sunday school.[1]

Catechetical Lecturing

More common than Sunday examinations were lectures on points in the approved Catechisms. In 1720 the General Assembly renewed former acts regarding such preaching. Having reacted against the Marrow of Modern Divinity, it recommended that ministers stress

> the being and providence of God, and the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, the necessary doctrine of the ever blessed trinity, in the unity of the Godhead: particularly of the eternal deity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the satisfaction to divine justice made by him, who is our only propitiation, of regeneration by efficacious grace, of free justification through our blessed surety the Lord Jesus Christ received by faith alone, and of the necessity of an holy life, in order to the obtaining of everlasting happiness.[2]

Evangelicals, including Boston, disputed the phrase "free justification through our blessed surety the Lord Jesus Christ," although they demonstrated by practice their agreement with using the Church catechisms as sources for doctrinal preaching.[3]

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[1]Vide infra, Appendix II.

[2]The Principal Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1720, Act 8 (Edinburgh: Andrew Anderson, 1720), pp. 18-19.

[3]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 348, 352. Andrew J. Campbell, Two Centuries of the Church of Scotland, 1707-1929 (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, Ltd., 1930), p. 46.

The pastor of Ettrick systematically went through the Catechism, but interspersed other series of sermons with his lectures and sometimes left the Catechism for long intervals. As a result, he did not complete his lectures on all the questions until about April 3, 1720, even though he began on October 30, 1709.[1] This method of commenting on the Shorter Catechism allowed pastors to indoctrinate their parishioners more thoroughly than in examinations and to introduce their own interpretations of finer points of theology. Its value was praised even by the Moderate party leader George Hill.[2]

Communicants' Classes

Although they could have complied with General Assembly directives about such work in the course of ordinary catechizing, several ministers spent extra time teaching young people what receiving a communion token meant. Boston held special classes

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[1]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 227, 274, 332, 338. Cf. "February 5. 1721 I ended my catechetical doctrine of the Lesser Catechism which I had begun June 2. 1706, and though continued for many years yet with many interruptions. As on some questions I have not been so full but too short, so on others I have been too long and tedious, especially on the Ten Commandments. I cannot say but I was assisted and had pleasure both in my study and delivering of them; May our great Lord and Master have the glory of all, for I think I will never preach them over again. Brand, Memoirs, p. 340. (transcription of abbreviated words and symbols mine.)

[2]Hill, Theological Institutes, p. 395.

for first communicants, in which he used a sacramental catechism as a text book, in his home or in the kirk for more than twenty years. Even though he was in frail health during the closing years of his ministry, he continued to do this every week or two from January to May.[1] Willison also favoured giving a specific course of instruction several weeks before the administration of the sacrament to those who desired to become communicant members. He commended a plan which other ministers besides himself had followed, by which they

> called their young communicants together in a public manner, catechising them, and opening up the nature of the gospel-covenant, and their baptismal engagement to them: and, with some solemnity, asking each of them their consent thereunto, and taking them engaged personally to renew covenant with God in secret, and make choice of God for their God, and Christ for their Saviour and husband, before they should approach to his table; and upon these terms giving them their tokens.[2]

He preferred catechizing, but suggested that in individual cases a minister could profitably assign other tasks of learning. As

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[1]Boston's idea for this came from Charles Gordon of Ashkirk, who died in 1710. He submitted to his synod his views about admitting persons to the Lord's Supper after such instruction, but it did not consider them at all. Boston, Memoirs, pp. 338, 437-38, 487.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 443; cf. pp. 442, 835; The Young Communicant's Catechism, p. vi. Cf. the practice of: James Hog, Memoirs, ed. Archibald Bruce (Edinburgh: J. Ogle and J. Guthrie, 1798), pp. 42-43. John Gillies, A Catechism Upon the Sufferings of the Redeemer.

examples he gave:

> 1st, Getting by heart so many questions of the Assembly's catechisms, or any other, and learning the meaning thereof. Or, 2dly, The reading of some chapters of the Bible, especially these which narrate the sufferings of Christ, and requiring them to be in readiness to give some account thereof. Or, 3dly, The reading some practical book upon the sacrament, and calling them to give some account of the same, Or, 4thly, Enjoining them to take heed to the first sermon, they shall hear upon the sabbath, or any week day, and to tell what they remember thereof. Or 5thly, Requiring them to humble themselves, and pray much in secret at this time, and to be ready at next meeting to give account what sins they have been mourning over, and what things they have been praying for, in view of their approaching unto the table of the Lord.[1]

Those assignments were designed to test a person's ability and desire to learn and, through personal attention, to stimulate progress in learning.

Others agreed that the pastor should speak privately with individuals, but thought only of the general practice, observed by Boston and Willison, of examination preceding every communion service.[2] This involved

> inquiring into the sense and feeling they have of religion upon their souls; what sense they have of their natural

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[1]Willison, The Young Communicant's Catechism, p. vi.

[2]E.g., on July 11, 1779 the minister of Cruden "appointed a diet of examination for young communicants on Wednesday." Adam Mackay, Cruden and Its Ministers (Peterhead: P. Scrogie, 1912), p. 87. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 835. Boston, Memoirs, p. 408. Boston also wrote a catechism on baptism and instructed parents before administering that sacrament. Ibid., pp. 171-72. Simprin Kirk Session Minutes, I, 144-45, 147.

> estate, and of the evil of sin; what thoughts they have of Christ; what they have been doing for their souls in secret, by way of prayer, reading, meditation, or self-examination; what influence sermons have had upon their hearts; what discoveries God hath made of sin or of Christ unto them; what meltings or tenderness of heart they have found in prayer, or in confession of sin; what are really their ends and designs in desiring access to this holy ordinance; and what things they have been mourning over, and praying for in the view thereof.[1]

The object was to discover evidences of personal faith in Jesus Christ, which alone would qualify a person to become a communicant member of the Church and would make possible worthy communicating. In addition to a private examination, pastors of Ettrick and Dundee insisted on a public profession of faith before the kirk session.[2] Since admission to the Lord's table was an act of church discipline under the authority of the session, questions were put to candidates so that the elders could determine their qualifications. When the Ettrick elders were satisfied with a first communicant's Christian knowledge, he was asked to answer the following questions, which Boston drew up, in the affirmative in order to be admitted to communion.

> 1. Do you believe the doctrine of the Shorter Catechism of this church, so far as you understand the same, to be the true doctrine agreeable to the holy Scriptures, and resolve, through grace, to live and die in the profession of the

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[1]Willison, The Young Communicant's Catechism, p. vii. Cf. The Practical Works . . . , pp. 835-37.

[2]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 408, 487-88. Willison, The Young Communicant's Catechism, pp. vii-viii.

> same? 2. Do you consent to take God in Christ to be your God, the Father to be your Father, the Son to be your Saviour, and the Holy Ghost to be your Sanctifier; and that, renouncing the devil, the world, and the flesh, you be the Lord's for ever? 3. Do you consent to receive Christ as He is offered in the gospel, for your prophet, priest, and king: giving up yourself to Him, to be led and guided by His word and Spirit; looking for salvation only through the obedience and death of Jesus Christ, who was crucified without the gates of Jerusalem; promising, in His strength, to endeavour to lead a holy life, to forsake every known sin, and to comply with every known duty? 4. Lastly, Do you promise to subject yourself to exhortation, admonition, and rebuke, and the discipline of the church, in case (which God forbid) you fall into any scandalous sin?[1]

Substantially, the second and third questions above correspond to the questions which Willison proposed in order to guide individuals in making a full profession of faith.[2] Finally, he urged that after completing his course of instruction, being examined, and professing his faith, a catechumen should be admitted into the communicant membership of the church with prayer commending him to the grace of God.[3]

By such means admittance to communicant membership in the church was made a meaningful event. In their concern for souls Evangelicals like Boston and Willison did not accept a person until they were convinced that he understood and sincerely

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[1]Boston, Memoirs, p. 488.

[2]Willison, The Young Communicant's Catechism, p. vii.

[3]Ibid., p. viii; Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 837.

adhered to the faith which he professed. Emphasis on the Lord's Supper in communicants' classes increased its significance. Many found sacramental seasons to be times of spiritual renewal as they applied what they had learned. Thus, training communicants strengthened congregations in the faith. However, there were several significant gaps in the teaching of the two named above. Though preparing their pupils to become church members, they said little or nothing about the doctrine of the church, the mission of the church, or the responsibilities of members to serve Christ through the church by contributing their time, abilities and resources. In private examinations ministers sometimes tried too hard to mould stereotyped attitudes and forms of religious expression. In this type of teaching lay the danger of stifling some individuals' maturing in Christianity, but it also attacked self-complacency. The scope of the curriculum in communicants' classes was small, but within its limits pastors succeeded in firmly grounding individuals in the doctrines essential to salvation and personal religion.

Religious Societies

Some Evangelical pastors extended their teaching ministry by leading groups of adults that met for prayer, Scripture reading, and discussion of Christian beliefs. Fellowship meetings or "praying societies" were a part of religious life in

the Lowlands of Scotland since the time of the Reformation, when John Knox wrote down directions for weekly meetings of Christians. In the seventeenth century praying societies arose in South and West Scotland as a form of protest against Episcopalian tyranny. This precedent for united prayer and mutual edification was followed in the succeeding century, especially by people in sympathy with the evangelical spirit and theology of the Covenanters. Many in religious societies were members of the Established Church, but a number of societies were associated with the Cameronians or with Secession churches, and some developed into Secession churches.[1] Fellowship meetings were often associated with revival movements during the century. Many ministers encouraged them, believing that their prayers and concern could spark revival. Also converts could be directed into the groups they led in order to receive instruction in their newly professed faith.[2] At the outset in the Highlands a praying society was always led by the local pastor.[3]

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[1]D. Hay Fleming, "The Praying Society of St. Andrews," The Original Secession Magazine (January, 1879), pp. 38-50.

[2]John Macinnes, The Evangelical Movement in the Highlands of Scotland, 1688-1800 (Aberdeen: The University Press, 1951), p. 213. "It is always observed (as worthy Mr. Boston says) in parishes where the gospel begins to thrive, that these meetings are set up as naturally as birds draw together in the Spring." John Willison and John Bonar, The Duty and Advantage of Religious Societies (Edinburgh: T. Lumisden and J. Robertson, 1793), p. 8.

[3]Kennedy, Days of the Fathers . . . , pp. 95-96. John

In contrast to this support opposition came from several quarters of the Established Church. When leadership of fellowship meetings in the Highlands passed into the hands of laymen whose policies ran counter to those of the clergy, Church courts suppressed them. Several Evangelical ministers approved of the suppression, because the conduct of meetings contradicted pastoral authority, fostered pride and vanity, diverted attention from more important things, and often discredited religion by displays of ignorance. The Presbytery of Tongue demanded in 1749 that religious societies seek the approval of parish ministers. The Synod of Caithness and Sutherland's ban on fellowship meetings held on Fridays before Sacramental Sundays continued in effect from 1737 until 1758.[1] At the end of the century the minister of Loth in Sutherland complained that meetings without

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Macinnes, "The Origin and Early Development of 'The Men,'" Records of the Scottish History Society, VIII (1944), 30.

[1]Macinnes, Records of the Scottish History Society, VIII (1944), 26-28. Macinnes, The Evangelical Movement . . . , 103, 105, 213. Donald Beaton, "Notes from the Tongue Presbytery Records," Old Lore Miscellany of Orkney, Shetland, Caithness, and Sutherland, ed. Alfred W. Johnstone and Amy Johnstone (London: The Viking Society for Northern Research, 1914), p. 167. Donald Beaton, Some Noted Ministers of the Northern Highlands (Inverness: Northern Counties Newspaper and Printing and Publishing Company, Limited, 1929), p. 173. Cf. one minister's comment, "It was ordinary in such conventions to start questions either frivolous or ill stated, and to allow ignorant people to harangue on them at random." Hew Morrison, "Notices of the Ministers of the Presbytery of Tongue from 1726 to 1763: From the Diary of the Rev. Murdoch Macdonald of Durness," Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness, XI (1884-85), 303-304.

any minister present were being held, to the spiritual detriment of the parish. His attitude that the drawbacks outweighed any benefits was shared by Alexander Gerard.[1]

Whereas those men thought religious societies were a threat to their authority, others found them to be useful aids in their work of parish instruction. Included among pastors who supported such groups were Thomas Boston, who asked some church members to meet weekly for prayer and "Christian conference"; John Willison, who wrote and acted to guide them; and John Erskine, who publicly recommended John Balfour's work advocating this means of spiritual instruction.[2] Besides fostering spiritual life, fellowship meetings proved to be excellent for

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[1]George M'Culloch, "Parish of Loth," The Statistical Account of Scotland, VI, 319-20. Gerard, The Pastoral Care, pp. 223-26.

[2]"After singing of a psalm, I shewed them from the word the warrantableness of such exercise, and withal the seasonableness of it for the time." Boston, Memoirs, pp. 99, 109, 122, 195-96, 198-99. Willison and Bonar, . . . Religious Societies, pp. 1-2. John Balfour, A Discourse Concerning Religious Conference (Glasgow: Robert Smith, 1745), Preface. Other ministers who took an active part in societies were: James Robe, James Baine, John M'Laurin, John Corse, John Brand of Bo'ness, Mr. Stewart of Cameron, John Munro, Daniel Beaton of Rosskeen, James Calder of Croy, and John Mill of Dunrossness. Ibid.; Brand, Memoirs, pp. 53-54. D. Hay Fleming, "The Praying Society of Cameron," The Original Secession Magazine (November, 1892), p. 806. Kennedy, The Days of the Fathers . . . , p. 91. John Gillies, Historical Collections, II (Glasgow: Robert and Andrew Foulis, 1754), 446, 448. Calder, Diary, pp. 14, 39-40, 60, 65, 69, 103. Mill, Diary, p. 18.

training lay leaders in the Church. In them men learned to pray, began to express their convictions about the meaning and application of Christian faith, and to assume the spiritual leadership requisite of church officers. One minister declared that in meetings supervised by ministers "gifted and spiritually-minded men were drawn out from obscurity and prepared for usefulness in all the duties of the eldership."[1]

Authority and Faithfulness in Pastoral Instruction

A general study of pastoral instruction in the eighteenth century reveals that pastors tended to be more faithful and parishioners generally responded more positively to this work at the beginning than at the end of the century. William Creech contrasted the nature of Edinburgh parish teaching in 1763 with that in 1783, when he wrote Edinburgh Fugitive Pieces in 1791.

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[1]William Taylor, editor, Memorials of the Life and Ministry of Charles Calder Macintosh (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1870), p. 15. "When a godly Highland minister discerned a promise of usefulness in a man who seemed to have been truly converted unto God, he brought him gradually forward into a more public position, by calling him first to pray, and then, 'to speak to the question,' at ordinary congregational [i.e. fellowship meetings.] According to the manner in which he approved himself there was the prospect of his being enrolled among 'the Friday speakers' on communion occasions [a mark of respected spiritual leadership which gave rise to 'the Men' of the Highlands]." Kennedy, The Days of the Fathers . . . , p. 94. Macinnes, The Evangelical Movement . . . , pp. 4-5, 44-45, 211-13. Cf. John Brand's training of elders in a similar way at the beginning of the century. Memoirs, p. 53.

> In 1763--The clergy visited, catechized, and instructed the families within their respective parishes, in the principles of morality, Christianity, and the relative duties of life.
>
> In 1783--Visiting and catechising were disused (except by very few), and since continue to be so: Nor, perhaps, would the clergy now be received with welcome on such an occasion.[1]

Creech reported that in rural parishes, however, the changes were not so marked.[2] In some cases Moderate apathy towards doctrine presumably led to a neglect of pastoral catechizing. John Macinnes gathered evidence which showed that many Highland ministers in the second half of the century did not perform this duty.[3] This neglect became widespread. The General

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[1]William Creech, Edinburgh Fugitive Pieces (Edinburgh: George Ramsay and Company, 1815), pp. 102-103.

[2]Ibid., p. 142.

[3]John Macinnes, The Evangelical Movement . . . , p. 50. The Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home was motivated in part by the journal of a preaching journey through "the north" in the summer of 1797, which disclosed the gross ignorance and the desire for instruction in that part of the country. This was probably Robert Haldane's journal quoted by A. Haldane. An Account of the Proceedings of the Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home, from Their Commencement December 28, 1798, to May 16, 1799 (Edinburgh: J. Ritchie, 1799), p. 5. In 1817 John Brown, a minister of the Associate Burgher Synod, decried the lack of religious education in many parish schools inasmuch as it was limited to "making the children commit to memory the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, and Willison's Mother's Catechism, and a few Psalms." Parish schools apparently fulfilled the General Assembly's directions, however. John Brown, "On the State of Education in Scotland with Hints for Its Improvement," The Christian Repository, II (1817), 2.

Assembly lugubriously observed in 1794 that "the ancient and laudable practice of instructing youth in the principles of religion by means of the Catechisms has been much neglected." The Assembly ordered as a remedy that parish schools require children "to commit the Shorter Catechism to memory, and by frequent repetition to fix it deep in their minds."[1] After shifting this responsibility to schools, the Assembly was asked in 1800 to consider an overture about the catechizing of parishes by pastors. At that time the ministerial delegates dismissed that reminder of their responsibility.[2] At the end of the century Professor George Hill praised the benefits of systematically expositing the doctrines of the Shorter Catechism, but noted that that practice was generally disregarded.[3] Men agreed that the ideal of pastoral work was not being realized, but few were concerned enough to stimulate pastoral teaching. As William Creech mentioned, many people

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[1]The Principal Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1794, Acts 9, 10 (Edinburgh: James Dickson, 1794), pp. 34-35.

[2]The Principal Acts . . . , 1800, Session 4. Reports of the failure of men to catechize at the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were made by some, who called for a return to the former pattern of parish teaching. "Review of A Catechism on Baptism . . . ," pp. 127-31. The Edinburgh Christian Instructor, Vol. XX, No. 12 (December, 1821), 800-802.

[3]Hill, Theological Institutes, p. 395.

came to share the disdain of many pastors for religious education. The Presbytery of Edinburgh observed both in 1726 and in 1730 that many absented themselves from "Gospel ordinances," i.e. services of preaching, and from "diets of catechizing."[1] Thus, it is evident that the denial of the importance of Christian education by parishioners began to build up early in the century in some areas.

The interest of people in catechizing was related to the authority of pastors over them as well as to their religious commitment. In suggesting a remedy to the problem of non-attendance the Presbytery of Edinburgh gave clues to that authority. Ministers were to advise Church members of their duty to understand important doctrines and to see that their children learned them also. The desire to know what one ought to do and believe was a sufficient motive for some. Through personal contact the minister could persuade others to study. High standards of Christian knowledge for admission to the Lord's Supper was another incentive for learning what the Church taught. These important motivating factors were recognized to some extent by the Edinburgh Presbytery, but it concentrated on the points of pastors' exhorting parents to bring their families

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[1]A Register of the Acts and Proceedings of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 121, Vol. XI, p. 459; Vol. XII, pp. 318-19.

to examinations, rebuking those who were absent, and checking the "testimonials" of strangers in the parish. Although the last measure seems incongruous with pastoral instruction, it was one of the strongest inducements for an individual to become an intelligent Church member, especially in rural parishes where outsiders were recognized immediately. A "testimonial" of good character signed by the pastor of the parish from which a man came was a passport in the early part of the century. Its possession was necessary to remove suspicion of illegal activities or scandal, and was essential to being accepted in a new community. Since testimonials were not given to those who refused to be catechized, there was good reason to accept pastoral instruction.[1] As towns grew, making human relationships more impersonal and increasing the difficulty of a pastor's becoming intimately acquainted with all his parishioners, participation declined. Also as the number of pastors indifferent to Christian education increased, indifference seemed to increase among the populace. In country parishes there were more factors working together to support the traditional practice of pastoral care, so in 1783 William Creech

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[1]Edgar, Old Church Life, I, 212-15. . . . The Presbytery of Edinburgh, XII, 318-19.

could still point to areas where catechizing was faithfully practised and received.[1]

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[1]Creech, Edinburgh Fugitive Pieces, p. 142.

CHAPTER V

THE PASTOR AS COUNSELLOR

Ministry to Families

At the beginning of the eighteenth century regular family visitation was a primary means by which Scots ministered personally to their parishioners. Biblical support for this work was found in Acts 20:20, where Paul spoke of instructing people not only in public but "from house to house."[1] Pastors of that period, who stood in the Reformed tradition, were predisposed to interpret Paul's example as binding, because Church of Scotland standards had stressed for the preceding century and one half that pastors were obliged to call on their people in private. For example, the Second Book of Discipline stated,

> Unto the Pastors apperteinis Teaching of the Word of God, in Season and out of Season, publicklie and privatlie,

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[1]John Willison, The Practical Works of the Rev. John Willison (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1844), p. 837. William Steven, The History of the Scottish Church (Edinburgh: Waugh and Innes, 1852), p. 175. Cf. John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion (IV.i.22), trans John Allen (7th ed.; Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936), II, 295.

> always travelling [travailling] to edifie and discharge his Conscience, as Gods Word prescryves to him.[1]

Men like Thomas Boston and John Willison were strengthened in this view when Church courts not only focused attention on the necessity of parish visitation but suggested a way in which it could be performed. Members of the Presbytery of Edinburgh in 1701 expressed the desire for a more uniform guide for the ministry of calling. The resultant report, which contained recommendations for "the more advantageous and edifying way of ministeriall visiteing families," eventually came before the General Assembly. In a modified form it was passed as the Act of 1708 for Visitation.[2] This act embodied the Reformed

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[1]The Second Book of Discipline, William Dunlop (ed.), A Collection of Confessions of Faith, II (Edinburgh: James Watson, 1722), 771. Cf. "It is the Duty of the Minister, not only to teach the People committed to his Charge, in publick; but privately, and particularly to admonish, exhort, reprove, and comfort them, upon all seasonable Occasions, so far as his Time, Strength, and personal Safety will permit." "The Directory for Publick Worship," The Confession of Faith (Glasgow: William Duncan, 1753), p. 497. John T. McNeill has pointed out that emphasis on family visitation was also found in books of discipline of the Continental Reformed Churches. This was more characteristic of the Reformed tradition than of Lutheranism or of the medieval church, in which the ideal of ministry to families was infrequently practised. John T. McNeill, A History of the Cure of Souls (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), pp. 190, 217.

[2]A Register of the Acts and Proceedings of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 121, IV, 72; V, 26, VI, 357. The Principal Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1708, Act 10 (Edinburgh: George Morrow, 1708), pp. 17-20.

attitude while giving more specific instructions for parochial visitation than any previous Church standard. The first provision of the act codified the maxim that each minister ought to visit the families of his parish at least once a year, a guide that had been implemented for some time according to Steuart of Pardovan.[1] For the years immediately following the Revolution Settlement his claim is borne out by the records of a number of ministers.[2]

Estimates of the importance of this ministry changed during the century, however. In 1699 the pastor of Simprin began his habit of annual calling the week after he was ordained.[3] The minister who entered the ministry at Brechin in 1703 favoured frequent visitation in homes and later praised

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[1]The Principal Acts . . . , 1708, Act 10, p. 17. Walter Steuart of Pardovan, Collections and Observations Methodiz'd; Concerning the Worship, Discipline, and Government of the Church of Scotland (Edinburgh: Andrew Anderson, 1709), p. 157.

[2]The following men testified that they visited families regularly in their pastoral service, which began before the Act of 1708 was even considered as an overture. George Turnbull, "Diary," ed. Robert Paul, Miscellany of the Scottish History Society, I (Edinburgh: The Scottish History Society, 1893), passim. John Anderson, Diary, Transcribed by A. Whiteford Anderson, University of Edinburgh, New College Library MS, passim. John Brand, Memoirs, The National Library of Scotland MSS, 1668, p. 51. Thomas Boston, Memoirs, ed. George H. Morrison (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1899), pp. 124, 227.

[3]Boston, Memoirs, p. 97.

the Act of 1708 as a useful plan for doing this effectively.[1] He called attention to that act, because he believed many ministers were ignoring that form of pastoral service. As the century progressed the influence of the Act of 1708 and of the men of his mind decreased. By 1800 there were complaints that a large number of the Established clergy were neglecting the task altogether.[2]

At the time when stress on this work began to wane, John Erskine deviated from the traditional view. His biographer left the impression that he visited his people systematically in his early, village pastorates.[3] Yet, after he began serving

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 898.

[2]John Smith, who revived the suggestions of the Act of 1708, complained in 1798 that "pastoral visits are so greatly fallen into disuse in many places, that perhaps neither pastor nor people can now be much reconciled to them." John Smith, Lectures on the Nature and End of the Sacred Office (Glasgow: at the University Press, 1798), pp. 249-52. Another man stated in 1799 that "the omission of this very amiable and comforting duty [of annual parish visitation], has done an injury both to [the ministers] and the interests of that religion they profess; and has greatly contributed to the progress of Seceders and other sectaries among us of late." The Edinburgh Clerical Review, No. 2 (November, 1799), p. 4.

[3]Sir Henry Moncreiff Wellwood, Account of the Life and Writings of John Erskine (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Company, 1818), pp. 70-71. Moncreiff was known for "the efficient visitation and examination" of the populous parish of St. Cuthbert's in Edinburgh. [John Anderson], Sketches of the Edinburgh Clergy of the Established Church of Scotland (Edinburgh: John Anderson, 1832), p. 92.

the New Grayfriars Church in Edinburgh, he expressed the opinion that regular pastoral visits to homes were not always practical and should not be considered a necessary duty. After excusing ministers who found family visitation to be beyond their strength and time in parishes where the population was numerous or continually shifting, Erskine concluded that "public duties, which at once promote the good of many, are to be preferred to private duties, which promote the good of a few families or individuals."[1] Although he did not value systematic visitation as highly as Boston and Willison, he did not deprecate calling altogether. He conceded that much good could be done when it was properly planned and carried out. In fact, Erskine believed that pastors should call on families who had experienced "signal mercies" or were troubled with "afflictive providences."[2] His attitude toward annual visiting was conditioned by the difficulty of maintaining such a system in a crowded city and the danger that calls would become hurried, formal and impersonal. Thus, it would be wrong to identify him with the disregard of visitation which became widespread in the latter half of the century.

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[1]John Erskine, Discourses, I (Edinburgh: William Creech and Archibald Constable, 1798), 125.

[2]Ibid., pp. 124-25.

Differing views about the main purpose of this work were held by Boston, Willison and Erskine. The first of the three acted in accord with Reformed ministers of the preceding century, who believed that the central act of private pastoral visits, as of all aspects of the ministry, was the preaching of the Word of God.[1] In homes he applied doctrines which he had previously taught from the pulpit, dealing especially with salvation, Christian conduct, family responsibilities and family worship.[2] The Act of 1708 supported the view that visiting should be a direct extension of the pulpit ministry.[3] That act, which stated that a minister should visit having "the Love of God, and the Desire of Salvation of People's

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[1]Thomas Edward Weir, "Pastoral Care in the Church of Scotland in the Seventeenth Century" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Edinburgh Library), pp. 173-76.

[2]Boston, Memoirs, p. 124. For his teaching about family duties vide Thomas Boston, The Whole Works of Thomas Boston, ed. Samuel M'Millan (Aberdeen: George and Robert King, 1848), II, 212-37.

[3]Other ministers who held the same view as Boston included: John Brand of Bo'ness (1694-1727); Memoirs, pp. 51, 113. Hugh Corse of Bower (1701-1738); John Macinnes, The Evangelical Movement in the Highlands of Scotland, 1688-1800 (Aberdeen: The University Press, 1951), p. 48. Donald Beaton of Rosskeen (1717-1754), who preached to parishioners in "ale houses" as well as homes; Donald Mackinnon, The Clerical Sons of Skye (Dingwall: North Star Office, 1930), pp. 58-59. Alexander Pope of Reay (1734-1782); Donald Sage, Memorabilia Domestica (Wick: W. Rae, 1889), pp. 45, 47. Hector M'Phail of Resolis (1748-1774); John Kennedy, The Days of the Fathers in Ross-Shire (Inverness: "Northern Chronicle" Office, 1897), p. 53.

souls," repeatedly directed pastors to preach God's Word by speaking to all about "the necessity of regeneration, and the advantages of serious religion and godliness, of piety towards God and justice and charity towards man."[1] John Willison commended the Act of 1708 as a good guide, but he regarded visitation chiefly as a means of examining parishioners' understanding and experience of Christianity. On the basis of what he learned from his inquiries about the spiritual understanding of his people, he applied God's Word of salvation, advised people how to listen to sermons, and told them how to read the Bible and to pray.[2]

Another position, which was adopted by John Erskine, stressed a ministry of listening in order to become acquainted with and to guide parishioners. During his first years of pastoral visiting Erskine gave discourses about Christian faith and life, but he later questioned their value if a pastor did

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[1]That act recommended that pastors exhort servants to fear and serve God and to be dutiful, faithful and obedient. Ministers were to teach children to love God and to honour their parents. Parents were to be reminded of their duties to punish vice, to encourage piety, to oversee religious instruction, to direct observance of the Lord's Day, and to lead family worship. The minister was also supposed to speak to them in private about their own salvation. The Principal Acts . . . , 1708, Act 10, pp. 17-20.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 837. Cf. the similar view of John Smith, Lectures . . . , pp. 250-52.

not know his people intimately.[1] To win people's confidence and to know how to instruct them, a man needed to listen to their doubts, objections to religion, problems, and expressions of faith. Then he could guide them with appropriate instruction, exhortation, reproof or comfort.[2] This view embodied the sound principles of encouraging people to state their problems and of listening to them, which are so important for understanding and counselling. A modern counsellor has stated that "the easiest way to help people is to understand them. . . . The easiest way to understand them is to listen to them, 'to hear them out.'"[3] Erskine listened in order to give spiritual

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[1]Moncrieff Wellwood, . . . John Erskine, pp. 70-71.

[2]Erskine, Discourses, I, 124-25. Cf. Moderate George Hill's statement, "The first private duty of the pastoral office, and the foundation of all the rest, is this, that a minister cultivate an acquaintance with his people, considering himself . . . as a watchman appointed to care for their souls, whose public discourses . . . and whose private intercourse ought to be regulated by some knowledge of their circumstances. The common way of acquiring this acquaintance with the people, is by visitation of families." George Hill, Theological Institutes (Edinburgh: Bell & Bradfute, 1803), p. 391.

[3]Wayne Oates, The Christian Pastor (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1951), p. 124. Cf. his point that in order to be helpful, listening cannot be merely passive sitting, but must include active encouragement to talk and close attention to what is said. Ibid., pp. 124-27. On the importance of listening for accepting a person, understanding his need, and helping him cf. Seward Hiltner, Pastoral Counseling (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949), pp. 19-22, 47-54. Seward Hiltner, Preface to Pastoral Theology (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958), p. 111. Russell L. Dicks, Pastoral Work and Personal Counseling (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959), pp. 43-49.

guidance, but he did not always center attention completely on the parishioner's thought and need. Of course, he did not understand the dynamics of directive and non-directive listening, which in recent years have become better understood as tools of counselling.[1] In his concern to refute erroneous beliefs and to rebuke offensive conduct Erskine was like other Evangelicals of his day, but he advocated speaking with candor, discretion and meekness.

Various other aspects of pastoral care were also served by parish visitation in the eighteenth century. By becoming acquainted with his people, a pastor could better pray for them and prepare sermons which would meet their spiritual needs.[2] Catechizing and communion rolls were expanded and corrected. In order to correct serious offenses Steuart of Pardovan and the Act of 1708 recommended that pastors deal privately with

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[1]Erskine, Discourses, I, 77-79, 110, 127-28. Seward Hiltner has pointed out that moralizing and taking sides with or against a counsellee limits the help a pastor can give. Pastoral Counseling, p. 49. Directive listening employs questions to educe a counsellee's feelings about a particular problem area. Non-directive listening is comparatively passive and, yet, supportive through gestures encouraging the parishioner to express his thought and need. Dicks, Pastoral Work . . . , pp. 43-49. Cf. Richard C. Cabot and Russell L. Dicks, The Art of Ministering to the Sick (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953), pp. 197-202.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , II, 239. Boston, Memoirs, p. 124. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 837. Erskine, Discourses, I, 125.

anyone tainted with errors or vice.[1] The role of peacemaker was taken seriously. When differences split relatives or neighbours, pastors acted to reconcile their parishioners and to urge them to live in peace and love.[2] Pastoral calling was also undertaken to win over parishioners who disassociated themselves from the Established Church. Thomas Boston tried to persuade dissenters of their error and to bring them back into the Church, but his arguments for the most part were ineffective.[3] Some Highland Evangelicals resorted to coercive tactics to compel people to hear their message. A mild example was Walter Ross' confiscation of the cooking utensils in a fishing village that repeatedly emptied of its suspicious inhabitants when he approached. He returned the pots and pans after entertaining the villagers at a meal two days later. At that

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[1]Steuart of Pardovan, Collections . . . , p. 158. The Principal Acts . . . , 1708, Act 10, pp. 17-20.

[2]The Principal Acts . . . , 1708, Act 10, pp. 17-20. Boston was supported by his Kirk session in reproving and reconciling neighbours who quarrelled. Simprin Kirk Session Minutes, 1699-1714, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 346, Vol. I, pp. 20-21, 107-109, 134. Cf. Brand Memoirs, pp. 360-61. Erskine, Discourses, I, 126-27.

[3]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 216-17, 218, 245, 428.

time they promised to receive his visits and to attend church.[1] The varied forms of ministry to families, which were common to all ages of church history, were carried out in an evangelical spirit to augment the overall task of winning men to Christ and guiding them in lives of Christian discipleship.

Ministry to the Sick and Dying

Responsibility

Boston, Willison and Erskine believed that a pastor's most important and often most effective ministry to individuals was to the sick and dying, for in suffering more than in any other human experience attention could be focused on a man's relation to God. Reminders of the frailty of life made the alternatives of salvation and damnation, which were so prominent in evangelical thought, even more crucial. The second of those men to enter the pastorate felt that affliction predisposed a person to consider his spiritual welfare and warranted special effort to help him find peace with God. He advocated faithful calling on the afflicted because it was the best, and

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[1]John Noble, Religious Life in Ross (Inverness: The Northern Counties Newspaper and Printing and Publishing Company, Ltd., 1909), pp. 123-24. Cf. the use of physical force by Eneas Sage to get parishioners to hear him. Sage, Memorabilia Domestica, pp. 18-19.

might be the last, opportunity "for doing good" for his soul.[1] The last of the three agreed. Since in suffering "the Lord maketh the heart soft" so that the mind is then more susceptible of serious impressions, and hearkens, with avidity, to what, in the day of prosperity, was despised," failure to minister to the sick would be a grave offense.[2]

Concern for the afflicted was promoted in the Reformed Church of Scotland by its judicatories. Censure of ministers for negligence in visiting the sick was prescribed by acts of the General Assembly in 1596 and 1638, which were supplemented by directives in 1638, 1700 and 1706 for investigating pastors' faithfulness.[3] The Westminster Directory for Public Worship, which was accepted as a Church standard in 1645 and recognized as authoritative by the General Assembly in 1694, 1704 and 1705, also emphasized the pastor's responsibility to the sick

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 809. Boston's summary of pastoral duties included by implication calling on the sick and dying, which his Memoirs show him to have done faithfully. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , IV, 313. Boston, Memoirs, passim.

[2]Erskine, Discourses, I, 125-26; cf. I, 34, 66-67. Similar views were expressed by John Smith, Lectures . . . , p. 257.

[3]The Principall Acts of the Solemne General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland, 1638, Sessions 23, 24 (Edinburgh: Andrew Hart, 1639), pp. 31-32. The Principal Acts . . . , 1700, Act 22, p. 28; 1706, Act 16, p. 12. Steuart of Pardovan, Collections . . . , pp. 285-86. Vide supra, pp. 17-18.

and strongly influenced the thinking of eighteenth century Scots.[1] The concern of Evangelicals of the 1700's about ministering to the sick corresponded to that found throughout the history of the Christian cure of souls. However, it was expressed in terms of the seventeenth century attitude that

> Times of Sickness and Affliction are special Opportunities put into his Hand by God, to minister a Word in Season to weary Souls: Because then the Consciences of Men are, or should be, more awakned to bethink themselves of their spiritual Estate for Eternity; and Satan also takes Advantage then, to load them more with sore and heavy Temptations: Therefore the Minister, being sent for, and repairing to the Sick, is to apply himself with all Tenderness and Love, to administer some spiritual Good to his Soul.[2]

The Memoirs of Thomas Boston reveal such a faithful ministry to the sick and dying. That Ettrick pastor customarily prayed for the sick in Sunday worship services and visited them

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[1] The Principall Acts . . . , 1745. The Principal Acts . . . , 1694, 1704, 1705. Frederick McNally has shown that the Westminster Directory was not closely followed in Scottish services of worship in the eighteenth century. However, its directions for ministry to the afflicted were accepted, as is evident from the repetition of their thought and terminology by Evangelicals Willison and Erskine and by Moderate Alexander Gerard. Frederick Walker McNally, "The Westminster Directory, Its Origin and Significance" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Edinburgh), pp. 412-15. Cf. G. W. Sprott, The Worship and Offices of the Church of Scotland (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1882), p. 6. Vide Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 809-10. Erskine, Discourses, I, 66-67, 125-26. Alexander Gerard, The Pastoral Care (London: T. Cadell Jun. and W. Davies, 1799), pp. 164-71.

[2] The Confession of Faith, p. 498; cf. pp. 514-15.

during the following week. Except in the case of dissenters, who regarded another man as their pastor, he did not wait to be asked to call on the sick. Only during one week in the winter of 1721 did he fail to call promptly after learning a person was sick. When two persons died before he reached them, he felt rebuked by God. Thereafter he did not procrastinate. He always went at once to see any one he knew was dying until one occasion in 1730 when he was prevented by "low circumstances of body." Then God answered his prayer to preserve a woman's life until he could see her the next day.[1] In spite of reported laxity at the close of the century this sense of responsibility to the sick was shared throughout the 1700's by other Evangelicals and by several Moderates as well.[2] George Ridpath, Thomas Somerville, Alexander Gerard and George Hill were notable among Moderates who ministered to the sick.[3]

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[1]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 355, 428, 445, 446-47, et. passim.

[2]John Smith implied in 1798 that Established clergymen needed to be reminded of their duty to pray with the sick and to console them with Scripture. Lectures . . . , p. 261.

[3]George Ridpath, Diary, ed. James Balfour Paul (Edinburgh: at the University Press, 1922), passim. Thomas Somerville, My Own Life and Times, 1741-1814 (Edinburgh: Edmonston & Douglas, 1861), p. 126. Gerard, The Pastoral Care, pp. 164-67. Hill, Theological Institutes, p. 404. Hill stood out from the other three by contending that generally a minister should not go to the sick until he was invited. Ibid.

John Anderson and Robert Wodrow, whose patterns of visiting the ill were the same as Boston's, were two among a host of conscientious Evangelicals.[1]

The Magnitude of Suffering

The problem of suffering was magnified by the precariousness of life, which was short and filled with hardship in the eighteenth century. Because medical science was in its infancy, illness was always serious. A large proportion of children died before reaching maturity, while those who reached adulthood could expect an average life span cut short by a variety of ailments and diseases. Smallpox, which regularly recurred and had an extremely high mortality rate, was the scourge of the century. In one parish it broke out at least once every seven years and in another it reached epidemic proportions every four or five years.[2] Even after inoculation was

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[1]Anderson, Diary, pp. 8, 9, 16. Robert Wodrow, Analecta, II (Edinburgh: for the Maitland Club, 1842), 362. Cf. Brand, Memoirs, p. 114. James Calder, Diary, ed. William Taylor (Stirling: Peter Drummond, 1875), passim. Hugh Cunningham, Diary, University of Edinburgh, New College Library MS, passim, esp. p. 17.

[2]Harry Robertson, "Parish of Kiltearn," The Statistical Account of Scotland, ed. John Sinclair, I (Edinburgh: William Creech, 1791), 263. George Low, "United Parishes of Birsay and Harray," Ibid., XIV (1795), p. 313. "In the eighteenth century smallpox, the worst of the epidemics, was apt to be deadly among

introduced, smallpox took a high toll of lives, because so many people refused to be inoculated.[1] One doctor found that this disease accounted largely for the fact that in Glasgow during the last part of the century the majority of children died. He reported,

> Taking an average of seven years, I found that more than one-half of the human species died before they were ten years of age, and that of this half more than a third died of the small pox, so that nearly a fifth of all that were born alive perished by this dreadful malady.[2]

Epidemics of typhus and cholera also caused many deaths.[3]

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children. "In two years (1740-42), we are told, over 2,700 persons, mostly children, died at Edinburgh." George S. Pryde, Scotland from 1603 to the Present Day, Vol. II of A New History of Scotland (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1962), p. 87.

[1]"Smallpox inoculation . . . was rejected by the lower [classes]; and the bills of mortality prove the deaths by smallpox to have increased after the practice of inoculation was introduced." Dr. R. Cowan, "Vital Statistics of Glasgow," Statistical Journal, I, p. 233, quoted by D. F. Macdonald, Scotland's Shifting Population, 1770-1850 (Glasgow: Jackson, Son and Co., 1937), p. 89. Vide pp. 8, 90 where Macdonald draws on The Statistical Account of Scotland, III, 376-77, and on Dr. R. Watt, An Inquiry Into the Relative Mortality of the Principal Diseases of Children in Glasgow (1813), p. 50. These sources state that in one Highland parish only one in thirteen infected during the 1798 epidemic recovered, and that smallpox deaths in Glasgow numbered 425 in 1784 and 607 in 1791. Cf. The Statistical Account . . . , XIX (1797), 195-98.

[2]Watt, An Inquiry . . . , p. 6, quoted by Macdonald, Scotland's Shifting Population, pp. 94-95.

[3]Ibid., p. 92.

The general lack of sanitation and of prophylactic measures contributed to the spread of disease. Malarial fevers, which sapped strength and were not infrequently fatal, infected many people year after year where pools of stagnant water were allowed to stand and neighbours communicated disease throughout the parish after visiting sick friends.[1] In the face of disease, on which the prevailing primitive and quack remedies had little effect, people were almost helpless.[2]

During the first half of the century the difficulty of garnering provisions for a family added to the insecurity of life. Agricultural methods resembling those used in the Middle Ages yielded poor crops that were further diminished by bad weather.[3] James Handley pinpointed the farmer's plight when he

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[1]Thomas Somerville, My Own Life and Times - 1741-1814 (Edinburgh: Edmonston & Douglas, 1861), p. 343; Robertson, The Statistical Account . . . , I, 262-63; George Rainy, "Parish of Criech," Ibid., VIII (1793), 364; Dugald Campbell, "Parish of Glasary," Ibid., XIII (1794), 658.

[2]Unorthodox methods such as Mesmerism, Phrenology and Quackery were sponsored even by medical men during the century. Physicians and surgeons were neither numerous nor highly skilled. Douglas Guthrie, A History of Medicine (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd., 1945), pp. 262-63. Cf. Pryde, Scotland from 1603 to the Present Day, p. 87. Henry Grey Graham, The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1906), pp. 48-52.

[3]James E. Handley, Scottish Farming in the Eighteenth Century (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1953), passim. Vide esp. pp. 34-35. Graham, The Social Life of Scotland . . . , pp. 146-68.

stated that though the weather was not worse two hundred years ago than it is today,

> without drainage, liming, fertilizers, suitable varieties of crops and grasses, and other aids by means of which the disadvantages of climate are largely neutralized, the eighteenth-century farmer was defenceless against the assaults of nature.[1]

As a result, famines and months of near-starvation added to the afflictions suffered by Scots of the eighteenth century.[2]

God and Suffering

Faced with conditions which made sickness, death and adversity common, ministers tried to explain the relation of God to man's suffering. To Boston and Willison it seemed that biblical plagues and famines which troubled Israel paralleled the forces with which Scots could not cope. To their own situation they applied the prophets' message that God dealt with men through natural events and especially through affliction. In so doing they followed the lead of John Calvin, who drew heavily on the Old Testament for the doctrine that nothing

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[1]Handley, Scottish Farming . . . , p. 36.

[2]"Besides the misery occasioned in the first decade of the century, the years 1740, 1756, 1778, 1782-3, 1796, and 1799-1800 are mentioned as years of great distress approaching to famine, all due to the inclemency of the weather." Ibid., p. 35.

happened in the lives of men except by the will of God.[1] Natural phenomena, by which some men accounted for the vicissitudes of life, were only secondary causes under the control of God. Since God was the sovereign and wise disposer of events, affliction could be said to come directly from his hand. The teaching that God, not chance, sends disease had been maintained in the seventeenth century.[2] In the 1700's Moderates as well as Evangelicals taught that "all afflictions are appointed by the powerful, wise, and good providence of God, and that none of them can possibly befal any man without his permission."[3] This doctrine was applied more narrowly by Boston and Willison, however, than by Erskine, most Moderates, and, in some points, Calvin himself.

Allied with their belief that God sent affliction was the conviction that He sent it for a purpose. Scottish

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[1]"Things inanimate . . . are no other than instruments into which God infuses as much efficacy as he pleases, bending and turning them to any actions according to his will." "There will be no event which God has not ordained." John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion (I.xvi.2,9), trans. John Allen (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936), I, 219, 230. Cf. I, 222-26. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 508; X, 604. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 730-31.

[2]"The Westminster Directory for Publick Worship," The Confession of Faith, p. 498.

[3]Gerard, The Pastoral Care, p. 165. Cf. Hill, Theological Institutes, pp. 401-404. Erskine, Discourses, I, 486.

Calvinists believed that suffering was a result of the Fall rather than a part of original creation. As soon as man sinned, sickness and misery came into the world as part of the consequences meted out by God. Thereafter, God sent them for specific purposes, such as to punish and correct sin or to stimulate faith.[1] The pastors of Simprin and Brechin in the first decade of the 1700's taught that suffering was meant to benefit unbelievers as well as Christians. If adversity did not bring sinners to repentance, it could keep them from being worse than they otherwise would be.[2] Every affliction was a messenger from God in which a man should look for some lesson to be learned or a message to be heeded.[3] John Erskine did not comment about the pain of non-Christians and did not look for personal providential messages. Yet, he accepted Calvin's view that suffering was a part of God's will for men and that Christ orders all events for the Christian's best interests.[4]

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 534, 557; IX, 62-63; X, 602. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 744-46. Cf. Calvin, Institutes . . . (I.xvi.7), I, 227-28.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 509-510. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 746, 768-69.

[3]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 509-510, 519. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 737, 739, 744.

[4]Erskine, Discourses, I, 486. Cf. Calvin, Institutes . . . (I.xvii.7), I, 241-42.

Those three men felt that the afflicted, who were reminded of spiritual values by their circumstances, should be taught to trust in God and to accept His will, as each of those pastors understood it.

The Question of Fatalism

Submission to God's will, which was stressed by Boston and Willison, has been interpreted by some historians as a fatalistic acceptance of the status quo in light of the lack of agricultural, commercial, and medical progress in the first half of the eighteenth century. Henry Grey Graham implied that by such teaching ministers kept farmers from improving crop production and retarded measures to prevent and lessen the effects of disease. He asserted that

> infectious diseases were propagated readily, owing to the common fatalism of the pious-mooded people, who held that everything is ordained of God, and that if a thing did happen it was bound to be.[1]

The determinism taught by the authors of The Crook in the Lot and The Afflicted Man's Companion did resemble fatalism in

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[1]Graham charged that "religious feelings and Christian ordinances ministered to idleness, fostered prejudice, and depressed and hampered agriculture." The Social Life of Scotland . . . , pp. 159-61, 185. M. M. Mackay commented that diseases were accepted in that age almost as fatalistically as in India. M. M. Mackay (ed.), "A Highland Minister's Diary" [Murdock Macdonald's Diary], The Cornhill Magazine, CLII (November, 1935), 572.

its theory of the certainty of all future events. In the former work Thomas Boston maintained,

> It is evident, from the scripture doctrine of divine providence, that God brings about every man's lot, and all the parts thereof. . . . There is not anything whatsoever befalls us without his overruling hand. . . . It overrules the smallest and most casual thing about us, . . . yea, the free acts of our will, whereby we choose for ourselves.[1]

Elsewhere he stated that "God hath determined how often every one shall breathe in and out the air, how many rounds the blood shall go in our bodies, what number of pulses it shall make."[2] Willison also accepted the teaching of the Westminster Standards that by His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His will, God "hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass."[3] This doctrine was the reiteration of Calvin's teaching that "there will be no event which God has not ordained," and "what God decrees, must necessarily come to pass."[4] Certainty of future events depended on God's sovereign, rational, and purposeful will, however, rather than on the irrational, arbitrary and inevitable necessity known as fate.

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 507-508.

[2]Ibid., X, 467. "Every moment of our life hangs on the divine will and pleasure, Rev. iv. ult." Ibid., II, 661. Cf. "It is certain that not a drop of rain falls but at the express command of God." Calvin, Institutes . . . (I.xvi.5), I, 224; cf. Ibid. (I.xvi.7), I, 226.

[3]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 607-608.

[4]Calvin, Institutes . . . (I.xvi.9), I, 230-31.

Although the two Scots named above objected to the ideas of chance and fate, as Calvin had done,[1] some of their teachings were similar to a fatalistic view of hardship. They affirmed that God meted out suffering with an irresistible and unalterable will. All of man's attempts to remedy suffering, thus, would fail apart from God's blessing. Using colloquial terms the pastor of Ettrick said, "Whatsoever crook [adversity] there is in one's lot, it is of God's making"; and "The most vigorous endeavours we can use will not even the crook, if God give it not a touch of his hand."[2] Since God alone could remove adversity, it was wise to submit to His will and to wait for relief in His time. John Willison, in agreement with Boston, counseled, "The Lord is a God of wisdom, and will order and time all things well; and therefore it becomes us quietly to wait for his pleasure, saying 'the will of the Lord be done.'"[3] If out of discontent a man tried to alter his state, he could find himself opposing God. Because God would resist the proud and exalt the humble in the life to come, if not in this world,

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 533-35. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 608, 746. Calvin, Institutes . . . (I.xvi.8), I, 228-29.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 516-17, 522-25. Cf. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 737-39, 771-72.

[3]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 742; cf. p. 612. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 522-23.

those ministers deemed resignation to God's will better than desire for relief from pain or from a humble position in life.

> Whether it is we are under particular afflictions . . . or whether we are only inferiors in one or more relations . . . we must therein eye the mighty hand of God, as that which placed us there, and is over us there to hold us down in it; and so, with an awful regard thereto, crouch down under it in the temper and disposition of our spirits, suiting our spirits to our lot, and careful of performing the duty of our low sphere.[1]

John Calvin had also taught that in affliction men should admit their inability to help themselves and look to God alone for help. However, he made clear that submission should be due to belief in the love and justice of God's will more than because contention against God was both iniquitous and vain. The believer should say, "It is the will of the Lord, therefore it must be endured; not only because resistance is unlawful and vain, but because he wills nothing but what is both just and expedient."[2] In many of their statements, though, Boston and Willison left the impression that since the afflicted could do nothing but make his position worse, he should submit to it. For example, the latter condoned the reply of a sick woman when she was asked if she wanted to live or die, "I have no choice

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 552-53. Cf. Calvin, Institutes . . . (I.xvi.6; I.xvii.2), I, 226, 234-36.

[2]Calvin, Institutes . . . (I.xvii.8; III.v.10), I, 242, 772-76.

in that matter, but refer myself unto the will of God."[1] This approached the fatalistic view that whatever a man wills the results will always be the same and that, therefore, it is never any use to make one choice rather than another.

Yet, Boston and Willison did not inculcate sheer fatalism. Fatalism posits that an absolutely inscrutable power controls all things. Man is subject to an inevitable necessity, which is irrational and capricious. This leaves man without any meaningful choices or moral responsibility, if it does not altogether rob him of control of his actions. Contrary to that idea of man's impotence those two ministers argued that God's sovereignty did not diminish man's freedom and accountability for his decisions. They believed that God did not constrain men to act contrary to the free will He gave them. In fact, He even allowed men to oppose Him. In order to account for this paradox and for man's moral responsibility, they distinguished between God's efficacious will and His permissive will. God effectuated all events which were free of sin, including natural disasters and illness. With respect to "sinful afflictions," such as murder, rape and war, however, it could only be said that God allowed men to bring them on themselves. Although this

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 742. Throughout his Memoirs Boston refers to his acceptance of God's will in the death of his children, frustrated plans, etc. Memoirs, passim.

permission was as much a part of His eternal, unchangeable decree as His efficacious will, God was not the author of evil. Man was accountable for sin.[1]

In their view of the dual nature of God's will Boston and Willison differed from Calvin, but they agreed with his position that "the providence of God ought not always to be contemplated abstractedly by itself, but in connection with the means which he employs."[2] An implication of fatalism is that no matter what one does the outcome will be the same. If a sick man is destined to live, medical treatment is unnecessary, and if he is fated to die, attempts to overcome his affliction are useless. Against the thought that man is caught up in the outworkings of fate Calvinists taught that man's actions did affect his welfare. Because God did not ordain ends regardless of the means by which they would be fulfilled, man has the duty to use wisdom and available supplies to order his life in subservience to God's will. If the sick are to be healed, it will normally be as a result of medical care. Thus, The Afflicted Man's Companion

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 509, 557; Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 608, 611.

[2]Calvin, Institutes . . . (I.xvii.iv), I, 237-38. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 523. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 608.

advised,

> It is necessary to employ physicians, and use the best means for the recovery of your friends' health. The means indeed must not be trusted to instead of God, but used in subserviency to him, who hath appointed them, and can only give success to them.[1]

God's rational ordering of the universe provided inspiration to work for bread and to care for health. A rural pastor reminded his people,

> Ye plow and sow, though nobody can tell you for certain, that ye will get so much as your feed again: ye use means for the recovery of your health, though you are not sure they will succeed. In these cases, probability determines you.[2]

Since God's decrees were not capricious and man was not restricted by blind destiny, prayer was also an important means

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 813; cf. p. 770. Willison taught that the sixth commandment requires the preservation of life by eating, exercise and the use of medicine when needed. Ibid., pp. 679-80. Boston recorded the names of his doctors, from whom he received free treatment; mentioned that his wife frequently nursed the sick in the parish, and described remedies he took. Memoirs, pp. 44, 157, 179-80, 469-70. He advised the sick to use such means to gain relief. The Whole Works . . . , III, 523-25. He also purchased drugs with which to treat sick parishioners. Simprin Kirk Session Minutes, 1699-1715, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 346, Vol. I, p. 14.

[2]Thomas Boston, Human Nature in Its Fourfold State (London: W. Lockhead, 1809), p. 170. Cf. "The eternal decrees of God form no impediment to our providing for ourselves, . . . for he who has fixed the limits of our life, has also intrusted us with the care of it; . . . means and supplies for its preservation; . . . and . . . cautions and remedies [for dangers]." Calvin, Institutes . . . (I.xvii.4), I, 237.

by which to seek the overcoming of adversity. Prayer did not cause God to change His mind, but He decreed to bestow blessings by way of prayer, so that those who prayed would be rewarded.[1] The above view of the nature of God's providence prompted Boston to recommend, "Do what you can; and it may be, while ye are doing what ye can for yourselves, God will do for you what ye cannot."[2]

Despite their declarations of man's responsibility and ability to make decisions affecting the course of his life, Thomas Boston and John Willison did not fully surmount the idea of fate. In their presentation of God's sovereignty they stressed that He not only ordained each individual's affliction but determined its duration and the extent of relief. God's will was subject to no necessity. Yet, insofar as they taught that His decrees are carried out with such absolute certainty that no man can alter them, those Calvinists failed to stay clear of fatalism.[3] Even though they admitted man's

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 525-26. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 712-723.

[2]Boston, . . . Fourfold State, p. 169. Cf. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 679-80.

[3]"God hath, by an eternal decree, immoveable as 'mountains of brass,' . . . appointed the whole of every one's lot." Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 508; cf. III, 522. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 607-608.

responsibility to use means for his welfare, they believed that submission to God's will was better than relief from adversity. The author of The Crook in the Lot explained,

> I mean not but that ye may use all lawful means for the removal of your cross, in dependence on God; but only that you be more concerned to get your spirit to bow and ply, than to get the crook in your lot evened.[1]

Furthermore, if a man's efforts to change his lot were not marked by proper submission, his soul was endangered and he was inviting a more drastic humiliation by God.[2] Such overemphasis on resignation tended to discourage ambition to improve a man's position in life or to better living conditions.

The tenor of John Erskine's teaching was Calvinistic, but was more free of elements resembling fatalism. He held that though all "second causes" were subordinate to the control of God, God did not afflict men willingly. His instruction about the action man should take as well as his interpretation of the divine will differed from the teaching of Boston and Willison.

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 551; cf. 540-67. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 742, 748, 755-58.

[2]"If ye do not carry Christianly under it, ye will lose your souls in the other world." Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 533; cf. III, 518, 525, 544-46, 553, 561. "If you will not obediently bear God's rod now, you will then bear more in another world , whether you will or not; and God will make you able to bear more, when there will never be any hopes or relief." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 752; cf. pp. 749-52.

Instead of warning men that failure to submit to pain was sinful, he assured them that God could strengthen them for patient endurance. Suffering in general was not to be accepted without resistance. Man ought to use the best help that the providence of God afforded to overcome life's ills.[1] This emphasis was especially clear in Erskine's editing and publishing of A Reply to the Religious Scruples Against Inoculating the Small Pox. He concurred with the author's arguments that inoculation was not inconsistent with trust in God nor was sinful, even if a man should die as a result. To the objection that a man could not change the period of life which God had predetermined and fixed the Calvinistic reply was made, "How does anyone know, but this is to be the appointed means of their preservation in life."[2] Because such objections were still heard in 1791, the above pamphlet was brought out seventy years after it first appeared. Erskine's stress on man's responsibility to benefit from available means of aid strongly countered passive acceptance of conditions of life, which the popular Afflicted Man's Companion and The Crook in the Lot failed to correct.

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[1]Erskine, Discourses, I, 229, 232, 243-45, 253, 256.

[2]William Cooper, A Reply to the Religious Scruples Against Inoculating the Small Pox, ed. John Erskine (Edinburgh: M. Gray, 1791), p. 12 et. passim.

Lessons in Suffering

As Christian leaders had done throughout the ages before them, eighteenth century Scottish pastors sought God's purposes for suffering. Their interpretations were generally those of Calvin and the successive Reformed tradition. That Reformer taught that affliction was a mark of God's judgment and mercy sent to chastise and correct sinful dispositions, to restrain evil, to teach humility and patience, and to stimulate Christian obedience and self-denial.[1] John Willison repeated those thoughts, as they were expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith, when he told the sick "that sometimes God smites out of displeasure for sin, and for the sinner's correction and amendment; and sometimes for the trial and exercise of his people's graces."[2] The same pattern of thinking was followed by John Erskine and Thomas Boston, who defined affliction as

> a convincing work, for bringing sin to remembrance; a correcting work, to chastize you for your follies; a preventing work, to hedge you up from courses of sin you would otherwise be apt to run into; a trying work, to

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[1]Calvin, Institutes . . . (I.xvii.1,2; III.viii.2-6), I, 233, 241-42, 766-70.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 809. Cf. The Confession of Faith, p. 498.

> discover your state, your graces and corruptions; a weaning work to wean you from the world, and fit you for heaven.[1]

Erskine, however, did not apply the lessons of suffering as specifically and thoroughly as the pastors of Ettrick and Dundee did when they tried to help each person understand the meaning of his affliction.

The last two Evangelicals regarded sin as the root of all suffering, which in turn was primarily punishment for sin. Because sin had entered the world, all men suffered in some way. Old Testament passages were used to support the traditional view that sin "is the cause of all sickness and diseases," and to show that they were a form of judgment.[2] From his exegesis and the nature of pain the Ettrick preacher concluded,

> It cannot be questioned, but the crook in the lot . . . is a penal evil; . . . whether the thing in itself, its immediate cause and occasion, be sinful or not, it is certainly a punishment or affliction.[3]

Like Calvin they believed that miseries should make men conscious of their shortcomings, for, Willison asserted, "if our sins have not immediately procured the present affliction, yet

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 538. Erskine, Discourses, I, 229-30, 248, 468.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 737; cf. pp. 736, 739, 744. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 499.

[3]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 507.

the best of God's children must own, that they have at least deserved it."[1] In calamities, such as epidemics and famines, they saw God's judgment of parishes and the nation for contempt of His laws.[2] The high mortality rate made illnesses appear to be harbingers of death, carrying God's warning to repent.[3] In his own case Thomas Boston interpreted an injury, his daughter's hare lip, and a printer's distorted editing of Human Nature in Its Fourfold State as divine rebukes for his sins.[4] But not every distress was a penalty for some specific sin. Jesus' statement that a certain man's blindness was not due to sin meant that men did not suffer according to their unrighteousness. So, they warned their parishioners against censoring any who suffered.[5] Yet, they narrowed this perspective far

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 739. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VI, 379. "Wherefore in every affliction we ought immediately to recollect the course of our past life. In reviewing it, we shall certainly find that we have committed what was deserving of such chastisement." Calvin, Institutes . . . (III.viii.6), I, 770; cf. (I.xvii.1), I, 233.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , II, 664-67. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 26-27, 731.

[3]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 740-41. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 511.

[4]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 153, 159-60, 351. Cf. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 27, 739-40.

[5]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VI, 377, 379-80. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 739. Cf. Calvin, Institutes . . . (I.xvii.1), I, 233.

more than the Reformers in their personal counselling. They urged each counsellee to consider that ordinarily some one sin led to his distress. Even the Christian was punished by pain, which was the hell he had to endure.[1]

In order to benefit fully from adversity, according to the above pastors of Ettrick and Dundee, a man had to perceive in it God's specific message to him. The means of achieving this insight was through an "observation of providences." Boston was confirmed in this view by Divine Conduct: or, The Mystery of Providence, which was written in the seventeenth century by John Flavell.[2] The basic premise was that God's purposeful control of events meant that "Providence has a voice . . . which may be understood." From this Boston deduced that it was the Christian's duty to "labour to find out the design of providence." Failure to do so amounted to "a spice of

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 753. Cf. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 566. Calvin thought of affliction as punishment, but he did not try to identify the sin which caused the pain. Vide Calvin, Institutes . . . (I.xvii.1), I, 233. Luther believed that only unbelievers were punished by affliction. For the Christian affliction was a sign of God's correcting love rather than His wrath. What Luther Says, ed. Ewald Plass (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), I, 11-12.

[2]Thomas Boston, A General Account of My Life, ed. George Low (Edinburgh: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), p. 75. John Flavell, Divine Conduct: or, The Mystery of Providence (London: S. Bridge, 1698).

atheism" which showed "a contempt of providence, which the Lord takes heinously."[1] In the pattern of beneficial and adverse events in life, thus, appeared a spiritual guide. Studying it and heeding it was a means of maintaining a proper relationship with God.

Boston and Willison gave directions for determining God's message to prevent misinterpretation and to show that interpretation was not a matter of intuitive judgment. First, in adverse circumstances a man was to pray for understanding of God's mind. Then passages of Scripture which dealt with situations similar to his affliction were to be read. Believing that "as providence gives light to the word, so the word gives light to providence," those ministers taught that events would either fulfil or be interpreted by the Word of God.[2] In no case would the signification of providence contradict Scripture, the infallible guide for faith and practice. Finally, the

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , X, 602. "The works of providence are a book which the walker with God labours to read the mind of God in." Ibid. Cf. "Believe it, that God speaks as really to you by his rod, as by his word. . . . God spoke as truly by his ten plagues to Egypt, as he did by his ten precepts to Israel, and if the calm voice of the word were more regarded, we should hear less of the rough voice of the rod." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 746.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , X, 603. Boston, Memoirs, p. 447. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 739. Cf. Flavell, Divine Conduct . . . , pp. 127-28.

nature of the circumstance, the preceding course of a man's life, and the accusations of his conscience were to be weighed and used as helps for applying the biblical call to repent of a particular sin, to exercise some virtue, to note God's wisdom and power, or to give thanks for God's care.[1]

Boston's experience of noting the occurrence of favourable and unfavourable incidents reveals the dangers as well as the psychological benefits of his system. When the possibility of transportation to Ettrick confronted him, he prayed for direction and found that Acts 21:4, 12 and 13, which came to his mind, indicated that he should go in spite of the desire of parishioners to keep him at Simprin.[2] When bad weather kept him at Culross and when a "bodily indisposition" prevented his leaving Ettrick another time, he felt Providence would have him preach where he was.[3] Correlation of events and problems led that pastor to read in the death of a man's two children the judgment of his adulterous procreation of twins a short time before.[4]

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , X, 603-605. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 739-40.

[2]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 204-205; cf. pp. 185-87, 192-94, 199, 209-210.

[3]Ibid., pp. 102, 228.

[4]Boston, Memoirs, p. 222. Sudden and unusual death was often interpreted as the penalty for some heinous sin throughout

Such thinking fostered an unwholesome credulity among parishioners, which sometimes caused consternation in the manse. In January, 1706 Boston's daughter daughter Jane contracted the same disease of which her brother had died a year previously. The father was afraid that if she died people would say that God disapproved of his winter communion service, which was an innovation. Convinced that he was doing the right thing, he intimated the service, and was relieved when the girl began to recover.[1] When his duty was clear, as in fulfilling a promise to preach in another parish, he did it in spite of unfavourable circumstances rather than "make a Bible of providence."[2] Yet, he prayed for a sign to show whether he should have a son baptized soon after being born, because his wife became very ill following her delivery.[3] Such men who "observed providences"

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the century. Vide Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 27. John Mill, Diary, ed. Gilbert Goudie (Edinburgh: at the University Press, 1889), pp. 14, 19. John Watson, The Scot of the Eighteenth Century - His Religion and His Life (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1907), pp. 265-66.

[1]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 177-78. Cf. Rev. Robert Walker's warning in 1773 against interpreting a fatal accident during the building of a church as "a token of [God's] anger, or mark of disapprobation." Thomas S. Jones, The Life of the Right Honourable Willielma, Viscountess Glenorchy (Edinburgh: William Whyte and Co., 1822), p. 303.

[2]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 228-29.

[3]Ibid., p. 223.

disclaimed ideas of reading signs and portents as well as treating the Bible as a book in which to find a man's fortune. They frequently wrested Scriptures out of context, however, to fit them to their physical circumstances. When they prayed for tokens of providence to guide their decisions, they practised something very like augury. Instead of correcting parishioners' superstition those practices inspired credulous attitudes, which resulted in opinions that often ran counter to Christ's teaching. Redeeming factors in Boston's and Willison's unusual views of providential guidance included admission of mystery in providence that outreached human searching, and counsel that the most suitable responses to affliction were doing what God requires and reforming that with which He is displeased according to the clear teaching of His Word.[1]

Guidance to Repent

As in other aspects of pastoral care, but with an added sense of urgency, Evangelical pastors contended for the souls of the sick and dying. In their calls they first examined the "spiritual state" of the sick. An Account of the Last Words of Christian Kerr recorded such an examination by Edinburgh

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VI, 365. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 746.

ministers in 1702. They asked the eleven-year-old about her hope of going to heaven, sense of sin, practice of prayer, and willingness to die. By her answers, in which she frequently quoted verses of Scripture, Christian satisfied her counsellors.[1] This common practice in the early eighteenth century differed little from the bedside manner of seventeenth century pastors, who also felt that the high mortality rate of disease warranted their challenging parishioners to prepare to meet their God.[2] If a sick man was complacent about his relation to God, they questioned what evidence he had for his salvation. Giving his apology for this approach, Boston of Ettrick said, "I desire not to be peremptory in the particular cases; but I see the need ministers have not to be too credulous, but to try."[3] When he felt that a spiritually ignorant or a profligate person exhibited a false sense of security, he attempted to "bring him to a sense of his sin and danger."[4] Earnestness

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[1]Archibald Deans, An Account of the Last Words of Christian Kerr (Edinburgh: John Reid, 1702), passim.

[2]John Howie, The Scots Worthies (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1851), pp. 324-32. Besides Boston and Willison, Evangelicals who made this their practice included: Anderson, Diary, p. 12. Brand, Memoirs, p. 146. Turnbull, "Diary," pp. 397-98, 444. James Calder, Diary, ed. William Taylor (Stiring: Peter Drummond, 1875), pp. 19, 21. Mackay (ed.), The Cornhill Magazine, CLII, 575.

[3]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 260-61.

[4]Ibid., pp. 103, 112.

also marked Willison's directions to prepare for eternity, for he also held the attitude that God often sends sickness "to cause careless sinners bethink themselves concerning their souls' estate and condition."[1] Even the milder John Erskine, who warned against disheartening parishioners, taught that in the sick false security rather than despair "is the more common and dangerous extreme; and too great indulgence, has worse consequences than too great severity."[2] His attitude that it was better to err in earnestness than in lack of concern for souls was that of Evangelicals in general.

Thinking of suffering in terms of a call to repentance, Boston and Willison urged men to search their consciences; to repent of their errors; and to confess the sins that they remembered, that Scripture brought to mind, that other people noted, and that the nature of their distress suggested.[3] It was imperative for unbelievers to understand that for them the basic lesson of affliction was,

> Retire from the world, think on death and eternity, abhor those lusts and idols which God is smiting you for, flee

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 737, 739-42, 759-62, 778-807.

[2]Erskine, Discourses, I, 126.

[3]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , X, 603-604. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 739-40, 760. Willison advised confessing even sins of which a man was unconscious. Ibid., p. 740.

> speedily to the strong-hold: repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.[1]

The Christian also needed to renew his repentance. Thereby he would "remove all grounds of quarrel and controversy" between God and himself, would overcome the evil in his life, and would be sufficiently strengthened spiritually to face death or life.[2] With the intention of provoking repentance some ministers charged individuals with specific sins. Boston's prodding an adulterer to confess his guilt openly was a device he probably repeated in the sick room.[3] His contemporary, John Brand, thought similarly that only by accusing people and by warning them of God's judgment could he keep them from being "secure," as a result of which they would pass into eternity with unconfessed sin and, thus, into judgment.[4]

The drawback to this approach was its censoriousness, which alienated many people. For instance, Brand tried to coerce vocal confessions without proof of guilt and even when the individual could have been innocent of the crimes he named.

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 768.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 515, 538. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 738, 740, 760, 770, 780.

[3]Boston, Memoirs, p. 222.

[4]Brand, Memoirs, p. 146.

Yet, compassion must often have outweighed censure, because several who first cursed him later called for him, admitted their sins and asked for his counsel.[1] For people who were not antagonized those Evangelicals provided a helpful confessional ministry. Like the Reformers they valued confession for the cure of souls, but denied that any sacramental significance was attached to repentance. Their coercive approach, however, seemed to belie the opposition of the Reformed tradition to the compulsory confessional of the mediaeval Church.[2] Because pastors such as Brand and Boston became marked with an image of judgment, some conscience stricken individuals voluntarily listed their offenses.[3] Even in such cases ministers tended to be severe, because they did not wish to hinder the convicting work of the Holy Spirit which stimulated genuine and full repentance.[4] Reacting against undue

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[1]Ibid., pp. 134-35, 146, 161-62, 172.

[2]For a summary of the differing attitudes toward confession in the mediaeval and Reformed Churches vide McNeill, A History of the Cure of Souls, pp. 161, 189-91, 216.

[3]Vide Boston, Memoirs, pp. 121-22, 245. Brand, Memoirs, pp. 71-72.

[4]John Brand stated that as "ministers ought to be prudent so they ought to be faithful and particular in their dealing with dying persons that they may not die with a lie in their right hand; and observe in good minds that dying persons may neither presume nor despair. Such gross sins may cause a conviction and extort a confession, especially when people are

severity, John Erskine advocated discretion in making people sensible of their sins and in directing them to repent. He replaced the blunt, challenging approach of earlier Evangelicals with greater tenderness toward penitents, while seeking the same objective, namely, their salvation.[1]

Scottish ministers who did nothing to lessen convictions leading toward repentance and faith did, however, try to remove obstacles of guilt and fear that prevented the receiving of God's forgiveness. The most common problems involved anxiety about hypocrisy, proper repentance, inclusion among the elect, assurance of salvation, death, and the final judgment. These fears were accepted as part of the process of spiritual growth and answered individually, as in The Afflicted Man's Companion.[2]

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moved by the common operations of the Spirit, when there is no sense of the great sin of unbelief against the Gospel and the rejection of the remedy therein offered." Memoirs, p. 146. (transcription of words and symbols mine.)

[1]Erskine, Discourses, I, 126. With the same intention John Smith used Burnet's Pastoral Care to stress that pastors ought "in all tenderness and love, to convince the ungodly, to strengthen the weak, to comfort such as require consolation, to direct them how to improve their afflictions, to help them to be sensible of the evil of sin, of the faults and neglects of their lives, of the vanity of the world, of the necessity of a Saviour, of the sufficiency of the Redeemer, and the certainty and excellency of the everlasting glory." Smith, Lectures, pp. 257-58. Cf. Gilbert Burnet, Pastoral Care (London: Richard Chiswell, 1692), p. 195.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 742, 765-67. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 551, 561-62. Cf. "This

The record of Robert Shirra's conversations with a dying Dundee minister named Thomas Lister is an excellent example of the methods used to deal with "cases of conscience." Shirra found Lister depressed with a sense of guilt that made him despair of being one of the elect. The counsellor quoted proof texts and read Scripture to review the characteristics which marked believers and to show that by sinning a Christian did not lose salvation. With reasoned points he argued that the doctrine of election was meant to encourage believers rather than to discourage sinners, to all of whom the universal offer of salvation applied, and that Lister's desire for righteousness was evidence of his faith. Finally, Shirra reassured Lister that he had demonstrated that he was a true follower of Christ. Sincere counsel and faithful visitation provided the encouragement Rev. Lister needed to move through doubt to a new level of faith. After voicing his renewed trust in Christ, he was able to receive the support of Scripture, Psalm singing, and prayer, and to face death praising God.[1] This counsel, which

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is the Lord's most ordinary method, not only at conversion, but also in his after-dealings with his people through their life; and sometimes signally at their death: He wounds, and then heals; he smites, and then binds up." Robert Shirra, A Death-Bed Dialogue (Edinburgh: John Gray and Gavin Alston, 1769), p. 3.

[1]Shirra, A Death-Bed Dialogue, passim.

was representative of that given by Evangelicals throughout the century,[1] resembled the relief of religious anxiety that marked every age of the Christian cure of souls. Many of the spiritual problems with which ministers dealt were raised by their own preaching, but only doubts associated with emphases of the Reformed tradition, such as the question of one's election, stood out in any marked way from those of other periods. The spirit of consolation was that of all faithful pastors, and put into effect the recommendation of the Westminster Directory for Publick Worship that if the patient was broken in spirit by his sense of sin or lack of a sense of God's favour, the minister should point out the freeness and fulness of God's grace, the sufficiency of righteousness in Christ, and the gospel offer that "all who repent, and believe with all their heart in God's mercy through Christ, renouncing their own righteousness, shall have life and salvation in him."[2]

Death-Bed Repentance

The Evangelical minister never assumed that it was too late to lead a man in the steps of salvation. Jesus' promise

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[1]Vide Boston, . . . Fourfold State, pp. 195-202. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 765-67. Erskine, Discourses, I, 465-66. Smith, Lectures . . . , 261-62.

[2]The Confession of Faith, p. 468.

to the dying thief on the cross and the doctrine that salvation is the result of God's grace rather than men's works implied that a person could exercise the repentance which accompanies saving faith even at the close of his life. Boston admitted,

> We are ready to be hopeless of success, where persons have long stood out against the Lord. But God's heavy hand on a man, and a view of eternity, may afford a season wherein the wild ass may be caught.[1]

Erskine also maintained that the dying should not be neglected, "because the call of the gospel extends to every living man."[2] This attitude did not prevent suspicion of what Martin Luther referred to as Galgenreue, "repentance inspired by fear of the gallows," i.e. fear of death and judgment.[3] The unreformed lives of "penitents" who recovered from their afflictions proved that delayed repentance was rarely genuine. Willison concisely stated the view which the two Scots named above shared with him. "True repentance is never too late; But O! late repentance is seldom true."[4]

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VI, 471-72.

[2]Erskine, Discourses, I, 126.

[3]What Luther Says, ed. Plass, III, 1210-11.

[4]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 820; cf. p. 822. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VI, 480. Erskine estimated that there was not one real conversion out of ten thousand cases of death-bed repentance, but contended that this did not rule out the possibility of salvation for the dying. Discourses, I, 312.

On the basis of the salvation of the thief on the cross the pastors of Ettrick and Dundee offered hope to dying sinners, but not indiscriminately. The penitent thief trusted Christ the first time he was challenged to do so. Those who had not previously heard the gospel could take courage from that example, but those who before had spurned the call to repent could not expect to exercise faith in their last moments.[1] Vigorous warnings against delaying commitment to Christ were sounded by Boston, Willison and Erskine. Sudden death might rob a person of his expected last chance to repent, his conscience could become too hardened to mourn for sin, or God could withhold the grace necessary for repentance.[2] The second of the three declared,

> God hath promised mercy to penitent sinners; but he hath no where promised the aids of his grace and Spirit to them that put off their repentance: and he hath no where promised acceptance to mere grief and sorrow for sin, without faith and fruits meet for repentance; he hath no where promised to pardon those, who at last promise to leave their sins, when they can keep them no longer.[3]

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VI, 470-72. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 822.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VI, 473-74, 481. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 696, 819-20. Erskine, Discourses, I, 311-12.

[3]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 820. Cf. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VI, 480-81.

In the sick room Evangelicals assumed the possibility that God's Word could evoke faith. Elsewhere, in order to keep men from waiting until their dying day to repent, they acted in keeping with Augustine's statement about dying penitents, "I don't say, that such a person shall be damned, or that he shall be saved; but do thou, whilst thou art in health, mind the business of repentance."[1]

Many other ministers, who maintained that good works were essential to salvation, doubted, if they did not deny the possibility altogether, that a dying man could be converted. Among these was George Hill, who feared that zeal to convert the dying would do more harm to the attitudes of the living than good for the dying. He advised his students,

> If you annex no more value to a death-bed repentance than the Scripture warrants, you will not feel it to be your duty to sound an alarm in the ears of those who are approaching to their last agonies.[2]

Another Moderate teacher, who held that "a good life is the only preparation for death," questioned how the dying could perform the acts of piety that accompany Christian faith. Still, he

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[1]Augustine, as quoted by Boston, The Whole Works . . . , VI, 480. Cf. John Smith's agreement with Augustine's view, "We accept of their repentance who delayed their conversion to the end of their lives; but we make no great account of such conversions." Smith, Lectures . . . , p. 259.

[2]Hill, Theological Institutes, pp. 403-405.

felt that the minister ought to urge the sick to repent "as the best thing they can do, though the success of it be far from certain."[1] He warned that this should be done only when they were composed, so that they would not be caused to give vent to "violent passions."[2] Such suspicion of emotional aspects of religious expression was antithetical to the opinion of Boston and Willison that strong convictions which affected the emotions could be good. The idea that the necessity of good works prejudiced the case for death-bed repentance was also discounted by Evangelicals. John Erskine argued that God inspired faith and implanted holiness in the believer. Although this was ordinarily manifested by works of righteousness, works were not needed to guarantee the eternal life which God gave the elect who died in infancy or were converted in their dying hours.[3] Ministers who agreed with Erskine made salvation the object of their counsel of the dying, but the outlook of Hill and Gerard discouraged such efforts.[4]

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[1]Gerard, The Pastoral Care, pp. 171-73, 177-79. "All the promises of the gospel-covenant are made only to them who lead a holy life; and since these promises are the only foundation of our faith and hope in Christ, we cannot give encouragement beyond them to those who have lived a wicked life, and only begin to repent of it in the hour of their death." Ibid., p. 178.

[2]Ibid., p. 166.

[3]Erskine, Discourses, I, 309-312.

[4]For example, Alexander Carlyle, whose viewpoint was

Support of Christians

The support which Thomas Boston, John Willison and John Erskine offered to sick and dying Christians was based on God's control of events for his people's best interests. As Calvin had done, the first two of the three taught that the doctrine that God sends affliction "speaks comfort to the afflicted children of God." Boston asked, "Shall not God's children welcome the crook in their lot, as designed by their Father, who cannot mistake his measures to work for their good?"[1] Suffering was a part of "the discipline of the covenant," which God used to subdue strong lusts and prevent disobedience.[2] Although Erskine preferred not to say that God sent affliction willingly, he also believed that its chastening effects showed God's love in the design that Christians "may become, in a more plenteous measure, partakers of his holiness."[3] Other benefits

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similar to Hill's and Gerard's, refrained from speaking to a dying man about preparing for eternity. Alexander Carlyle, Autobiography, ed. John Hill Burton (Edinburgh: T. N. Foulis, 1910), p. 219.

[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 519; cf. III, 533-34, 538, 564. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 744-45, 748. Calvin, Institutes . . . (I.xvi.3), I, 220-22.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 519, 534, 564. Boston, Memoirs, pp. 106, 499. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 746, 756, 774-75.

[3]Erskine, Discourses, I, 487. Erskine's use of Scripture was repeated by Evangelical John Mill of Dunrossness. "He does

were summed up by the pastor of Dundee in the statement,

> God tries with sickness and distress, in order both to prove and improve his people's graces. . . . Afflictions serve as a whetstone to sharpen faith, . . . they excite to repentance . . . , they prompt us to heavenly-mindedness, self-denial, and patient waiting on God.[1]

When material and physical sources of security were removed, God remained the only source of comfort. Thus, distress was a stimulant for maturing in faith and exercising other virtues. To inspire confident faith in the midst of suffering, the pastor of Ettrick advised,

> Consider it being the work of your God, . . . who therefore surely consults your good. Consider his holiness and justice, showing he wrongs you not; his mercy and goodness,

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not afflict, nor grieve the children of men willingly, nor for His pleasure, but people's profit, to make them partakers of His holiness that they may share in His happiness." Mill, Diary, pp. 5-6. Vide Lam. 3:33; Heb. 12:10; and Jas. 5:11.

[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 738-39. Cf. "An afflicted lot is painful, but where it is well managed . . . it exercises the graces of the Spirit in a Christian which would otherwise lie dormant." Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 550; cf. III, 515. "God sweeps away from his people, many times, their comforts of sense, that they may learn to live on the promise by believing." Thomas Boston, Select Works, ed. Alexander S. Patterson (Edinburgh: A. Fullarton and Co., 1845), p. 381. Others who agreed included James Craig, Sermons (Edinburgh: Robert Fleming and Company, 1732), I, 229. James Robe, Counsels and Comforts to Troubled Christians (Glasgow: John Robertson, 1749), pp. 96-97. David Grant, Sermons, (2nd ed.; Newcastle: T. Angus, 1785), pp. 310-11. Cf. Calvin, Institutes . . . (III.viii.1-6), I, 765-71.

> that it is not worse; his sovereignty, that may silence you; his infinite wisdom and love, that may satisfy you in it.[1]

The authors of The Crook in the Lot and the Afflicted Man's Companion stressed the need to submit to suffering in order to receive God's comfort. They regarded discontent as rebellion against God's will, which involved unbelief, ingratitude and impenitence. Such proud resistance could only increase a man's burden by producing mental anxiety, a thwarted will, and the disappointment of lost happiness.[2] Submission, instead, would produce the "quiet of mind, and ease within . . . upon which the comfort of life depends."[3] Yielding to God's will meant more than unquestioning acceptance of whatever befell a man in life. It also included self-humiliation and conscious recognition of God's sovereignty, wisdom and justice. Boston and Willison directed men "to justify God," i.e. to admit that God's wisdom and holiness prevented His ordering any distress that was not deserved or beneficial and to refrain from

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 538; cf. III, 519, 533-34. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 744-45, 748.

[2]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 521, 530. Boston, Select Works, pp. 377-78. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 749-52. Cf. Calvin, Institutes . . . (III.viii.8), I, 772-73.

accusing Him of injustice.[1] "Kissing the rod" of affliction, the believer was to humble himself, to admire God's inscrutable wisdom, to praise His control of all events, and to give thanks for His mercies. Following Jesus' example, a Christian ought to desire "to bring up his will to God, not that God should bring down His will to him."[2]

Since affliction appeared to have been sent to drive men to their knees, Evangelicals taught men to approach God in prayer for His help.[3] Prayer was an avenue to reconciliation with God and the first means by which to seek relief from distress. With the assurance that God works all things together for His people's good, pastors guided Christians to pray for

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 527, 557, 563-64. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 743-44. Cf. "Since God claims a power unknown to us of governing the world, let . . . us . . . acquiesce in his supreme dominion, to account his will the only rule of righteousness, and most righteous cause of all things." Calvin, Institutes . . . (I.xvii.2), I, 235.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 750. The submissive Christian should say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Ibid., p. 746; cf. pp. 745-49. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 557-58, 562-64, 586. The above pastors displayed such submission in their trials. Vide Boston, Memoirs, pp. 153, 246-47, 344, 404, 447, et. passim. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 734-36.

[3]"God sends sickness, to awaken in us the spirit of prayer and supplication, and make us more earnest and importunate in our addresses to the throne of grace." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 738. Boston, Select Works, pp. 518, 577.

deliverance from suffering, for grace to endure it while it lasted, for increased faith and improved character, for assurance of forgiveness, and for the comfort of a sense of God's presence.[1] Willison added the recommendation that thanks also be given not for affliction as affliction, "but either as it is the means of some good to us, or as the gracious hand of God is some way remarkable therein towards us."[2] Consistent with pastoral care in all centuries Scottish pastors also prayed with parishioners and told them to expect comfort from those prayers.[3]

Further, pastors pointed Christians to God's Word for support to endure affliction. Within the Bible each sufferer could find the lessons of trials parallel to his own to guide his response of self-examination and confession, examples of patient endurance to challenge him, and God's promises to build up his faith and hope. Biblical statements were to be understood as God's word of comfort for individual situations. Boston assured his congregation, "The Bible will comfort, when

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 525-26; Select Works, pp. 576-78; Memoirs, pp. 500, 502-503. The Afflicted Man's Companion contained written prayers as guides. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 800-807, 811-12.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 758-59.

[3]Boston, Select Works, pp. 518-19. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 770-801.

worldly comfort fails. . . . The promise, 'I will be their God,' will comfort under the greatest pressures of affliction."[1] "A Collection of Comfortable Texts for Dying Believers" represented this use of scriptural support. Those statements from both Testaments contained expressions of trust in God, assurances of salvation, and promises of resurrection and eternal life.[2] Scripture strengthened a Christian and enabled him to mature in his faith. Therefore, if he learned and applied more of God's Word in his life as a result of affliction, it was good that he suffered.[3]

The prevalence of suffering led Scottish pastors to think that "this life is the time of trial for heaven." The people of Ettrick were taught, "God takes trial of men for heaven by

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , X, 486. Cf. his use of Scripture to comfort the sick. Memoirs, pp. 174, 501, 504-505. "Have I such great and precious promises left me, and shall I not live and feed upon them in the time of my need? shall I not trust the word of him that is faithful and true? hath he not said to me, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt.' . . . My Redeemer's compassion continues; his bowels are not shut up this day, more than in the days of his flesh." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 804; cf. p. 747.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 732-34.

[3]"Learning and keeping of God's word, is a fruit of sanctified affliction." Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 773; cf. pp. 739, 756. Cf. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 574; X, 486. Boston, Select Works, p. 381.

humbling circumstances, as the whole Bible teacheth."[1] In Dundee church members were reminded that affliction "is the common path and beaten road to heaven, that all the saints have trod."[2] Persuaded that suffering was necessary to prepare a believer for eternal life, one minister asserted, "Without being humbled with humbling circumstances in this life, ye are not capable of heaven."[3] Another declared, "Deep waters are not more needful to carry a ship into the haven, than great afflictions are to carry the vessels of our souls into the port of life."[4] In their dour way those men offered the encouragement of the truth perceived by John Calvin that God, "even in the bitterness of tribulations, . . . ceases not to promote our salvation."[5]

Promises of God's relieving affliction and the hope of heaven, which had enabled saints throughout history to endure

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[1]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 564; cf. 519, 565.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 755. "Sickness is a means appointed of God for his people's good, and particularly for fitting them for a better world." Ibid., p. 760; cf. p. 756.

[3]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 565-66. Boston's exegesis of the proof texts he cited is questionable. Vide Heb. 12:2; Lk. 9:23; Rev. 7:14; 2 Cor. 5:5.

[4]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 753.

[5]Calvin, Institutes . . . (III.viii.6), I, 770.

distress, were used to counteract despondency. John Willison and John Erskine assured Christians that Jesus' concern for them was a guarantee of coming relief. The latter stated,

> In his now exalted state, if thou O friend of Jesus, art in sickness, in poverty, in anxiety, in anguish of spirit, he earnestly remembers thee still. . . . In all thy affliction, he is afflicted with thee.[1]

The former pastor also tried to help each sufferer realize that Jesus was "sympathizing with him under his distress, feeling his pain, hearing his groans, bearing his burdens, and ready to relieve him in his own appointed time."[2] That time, according to the above two men and Thomas Boston, would be when God's purpose for the affliction was accomplished. Relief was certain and would not be long in coming.[3] When a man feared that pain would never end or expected to die, they offered the consolation that "whatever be the trials of believers in this world, there is a happy state abiding them in the other world, wherein they will be beyond them all."[4] In comparison to eternal bliss the

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[1]Erskine, Discourses, I, 229-30; cf. I, 334.

[2]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 747, cf. p. 757.

[3]Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 530-32. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 747, 753. Erskine, Discourses, I, 229, 232, 487.

[4]Boston, Select Works, p. 479; cf. pp. 443, 446. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 565, 587-90. In a letter of consolation he spoke of the perfect, pain-free, spiritual bodies Christians will have in heaven. Memoirs, pp. 506-507.

afflictions of life were brief and light. Employing the language of the twenty-first chapter of Revelation, Willison and Erskine declared that "in the mansions above there is no pain nor crying: the inhabitants there shall never say they are sick; and one hour with them will make thee forget all thy momentary afflictions."[1]

In his support of the sick and dying John Erskine stood firmly in the Reformed tradition of pastoral care with Thomas Boston and John Willison, although the tenor of his counsel differed from theirs. All three interpreted suffering in Calvinistic terms and were influenced by conceptions of the pastor's ministry to the sick embodied in the Westminster Directory for Public Worship.[2] Yet, Erskine stressed reasons why Christians could endure, while the other two spent most of

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[1]Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. 758; cf. pp. 753, 806. Erskine, Discourses, I, 473-74. Cf. Boston, The Whole Works . . . , III, 519, 567, 571-75, 577.

[2]In addition to other guidance Boston and Willison carried out the recommendation of the Westminster Directory that pastors admonish each sick and dying person "to set his house in order, thereby to prevent inconveniencies; to take care for payment of his debts, and to make restitution or satisfaction where he hath done any wrong; to be reconciled to those with whom he hath been at variance, and fully to forgive all men their trespasses against him, as he expects forgiveness from the hand of God." The Confession of Faith, pp. 499-500. Vide Boston, The Whole Works . . . , II, 229; Select Works, p. 494. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , pp. 743-44, 764-65, 780-81.

their effort telling men that they ought to endure submissively because suffering was good for them. The popularity of The Crook in the Lot and the Afflicted Man's Companion, however, makes clear that many Scots received from the teachings of Boston and Willison the encouragement they needed to face hardship and pain.[1]

Ministry to the Bereaved

Due to a desire to avoid funeral practices and superstitions associated with Romanism, ministry to the bereaved was limited in Scotland in the eighteenth century. That had been the case since the Reformation, when the First Book of Discipline recommended that there be no prayers over the dead, singing, reading, or preaching in connection with a burial.[2]

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[1]Thomas Somerville attested to the popularity of Boston's work in the observation, "Any books read by the working people . . . were such as they themselves possessed; and a select number of treatises of popular divinity, like Boston's Fourfold State, the same author's Crook in the Lot, and Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, might be found in almost every cottage." My Own Life and Times, 1741-1814 (Edinburgh: Edmonston & Douglas, 1861), p. 350. In 1864 David D. Black wrote of Willison, "His name still stands deservedly high as the author of the Afflicted Man's Companion." The History of Brechin, to 1865 (2nd ed.; Edinburgh: William Patterson, 1867), p. 119. Cf. Willison, The Practical Works . . . , p. vii.

[2]John Knox, The History of the Reformation of Religion in Scotland (London: Andrew Melrose, 1905), pp. 414-16.

The Westminster Directory for Public Worship maintained a similar position, but permitted the minister to speak to Christians to remind them of "their duty."[1] Aversion to religious services was so strong that in the 1700's the minister appeared at a funeral only as one of the mourners. When he was present, he was often asked to pray before and after the customary refreshments were served. This devotional task, which sometimes lasted half an hour, was otherwise performed by laymen.[2] Contrary to the practice of pastoral care in periods before the Reformation and in other branches of the church, the Church of Scotland minister went to the house of a dead man's family to do little more than express his personal sympathy.

If the diaries and memoirs of pastors can be accepted as accurate indicators of their pastoral care, more consolation

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[1]The Confession of Faith, p. 501.

[2]Andrew Edgar, Old Church Life in Scotland, Second Series (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1886), pp. 232-35. John Mitchell, "Memories of Ayrshire about 1780," ed. William Kirk Dickson, Miscellany of the Scottish History Society, Vol. VI (Edinburgh: The Scottish History Society, 1939), pp. 295-96. Graham, The Social Life of Scotland . . . , pp. 52-54, 300-301. Graham stated that after 1700 ministers usually went to funerals in their parishes. Ibid., p. 301. Such men included George Ridpath, Thomas Somerville, and John Wightman. Ridpath, Diary, pp. 5, 108-109. Somerville, My Own Life . . . , p. 133. David Hogg, Life and Times of the Rev. John Wightman, D.D. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1873), p. 117.

was offered through letters to friends outside their parishes than by calls on parishioners specifically for that purpose. John Brand's habit of visiting the family of the deceased a day or two after the burial to speak to them about "the Providence" was unique in his day.[1] Two letters of comfort which Boston wrote have been preserved, but he mentioned no such practice of calling.[2] Letters of several other pastors were included in John Erskine's collection of letters of consolation.[3] Comfort for the bereaved was also conveyed through teaching which prepared them to endure afflictions, including death. Few sermons, however, were preached after funerals to comfort and guide those who survived the dead.

Counsel for the bereaved was in most respects like that given to all who suffered. Acceptance of God's will and preparation for death through repentance and devoted Christian living were stressed. Consolation was found in God's acting for His people's best interests, even though some experienced the pain of loss when others were called to their reward.

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[1]Brand, Memoirs, p. 151.

[2]Boston, Memoirs, pp. 502, 506.

[3]John Erskine (ed.), Letters, Chiefly Written for Comforting Those Bereaved of Children or Friends (Edinburgh: Waugh and Innes, 1790).

Pastors assured parents whose babies died that Christ's love and God's covenant promise, "I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed," guaranteed the salvation of Christians' infants. Jesus' sorrow for those who mourned and the hope of the resurrection and reunion in heaven were presented to support those whose grief was strongest.[1] Boston and Erskine were especially sympathetic, because so many of their immediate relatives died during their ministries.[2] Though sometimes restrained by tradition, and at other times writing too much too soon to comfort the bereaved, they exhibited the compassion and declared the message of comfort that characterized Christian pastoral care from the time of the apostles.

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[1]Ibid., passim. Erskine, Discourses, I, 220-34; I, 452-72. Boston, Memoirs, pp. 502, 506. John Brown (ed.), A Collection of Religious Letters (Edinburgh: William Whyte, 1816), passim.

[2]During the first half of his ministry, Boston's father and six of his children died. Boston, Memoirs, pp. 159-61, 175, 217-18, 223-24, 263, 303-304, 502. Erskine buried nine of his ten sons. Brown (ed.), A Collection . . . , pp. 189-90.

APPENDIX I

Thomas Boston's Personal Covenant

The third and final covenant which Thomas Boston drafted and signed read as follows:

> O LORD, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I confess from my heart, that I am by nature a lost and undone sinner, wholly corrupted, and laid under the curse, in Adam, through the breach of the covenant of works; and have ruined myself more and more by my innumerable actual transactions, whereby my whole life appears in mine eyes this day a heap of vanity, sin, and foolishness. I am fully convinced, and do from my heart acknowledge, that I am utterly unable to help myself, in whole or in part, out of this gulf of sin and misery, into which I am plunged; and that it is beyond the reach of the whole creation to help me out of it; so that I must inevitably perish for ever, if thine own strong hand do not make help to me. But forasmuch as there is a covenant of grace, for life and salvation to lost sinners, established between THEE and thine own SON, the Lord Jesus Christ, as second Adam; wherein, upon condition of his fulfilling all righteousness, which is now performed, in his having been born perfectly holy, lived altogether righteously, and made perfect satisfaction to justice by his death and sufferings, thou hast promised that thou wilt be their God, and they shall be thy people, to the making of them holy and happy for ever; and that this covenant is, in Christ the head thereof, offered and exhibited to me in thy gospel, and thou callest me into the fellowship thereof, in him: Therefore (adhering to my former acceptings, and taking hold of it, declared whether by word or writ before thee, without wilful mistaking of it, or known guile), upon the warrant of, and in obedience to, thy command and call, I, in myself a poor perishing sinner, and worthy to perish, do now again TAKE HOLD of that COVENANT, for life and

salvation to ME; believing on the name of Christ crucified the head thereof, offered and exhibited to me, as the great High Priest, who, by the sacrifice of himself, hath made atonement, paid the ransom, and brought in everlasting righteousness for poor sinners. I CREDIT his word of grace to me, and accordingly TRUST on him, that he with his righteousness will be mine, and that, in and through him, God will be my God, and I shall be one of his people, to the making of me holy and happy for ever. O my God, I do by thy grace acquiesce in that covenant, as all my salvation, and all my desire. With my whole heart and soul, the SON incarnate is my only PRIEST, my surety, my Intercessor, and my Redeemer; and, in him, the FATHER my FATHER, the HOLY GHOST my SANCTIFIER; GOD in CHRIST my God. I resign myself, soul and body, to him, to be saved by his blood alone; renouncing all confidence in mine own righteousness, doings, and sufferings. With my whole heart and soul he is my HEAD and HUSBAND: and I am his only, wholly, and for ever; to live by him, to him, and for him. I take him for my alone PROPHET, Oracle, and Guide; give up myself wholly to him, to be taught, guided, and directed, in all things, by his word and Spirit; and renounce mine own wisdom, and the wisdom of this world. He is, with my heart's consent, my alone KING and Lord. And I resign myself wholly, soul and body, unto him, to be rescued, by the strength of his mighty hand, from sin, death, the devil, and this present evil world, for to serve him for ever, and to be ruled by the will of his command as my duty, and the will of his providence as to my lot. I am, with my whole heart, content (Lord, thou knowest) to part with, and do renounce, every known sin, lust, or idol, and particularly that sin which most easily besets me; together with my own foolish will, and other lords besides him; without reservation, and without exception against his cross: Protesting in thy sight, O Lord, that I am, through grace, willing to have discovered unto me, and upon discovery to part with, every sin in me that I know not: and that the doubtings and averseness of heart, mixed with this my accepting of thy covenant, are what I allow not: and that, notwithstanding thereof, I look to be accepted of thee herein, in the Beloved, thine only Son and my Saviour, purging away these, with all my other sins, by his precious blood. Let it be recorded in heaven, O Lord, and let the bed on which I leaned, the timber, and the stones, and all other things about me here, in my closet, bear witness, That I, though

most unworthy, have this second day of December, One thousand seven hundred and twenty-nine years, here taken hold of, and come into thy covenant of grace, offered and exhibited to me in thy gospel, for time and eternity; and that thou art my God in the tenor of that covenant, and I am one of thy people, from henceforth and for ever.

[Signed] T. BOSTON[1]

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[1]Thomas Boston, The Whole Works of the Late Reverend Thomas Boston of Ettrick, ed. Samuel M'Millan (Aberdeen: George and Robert King, 1848), II, 672-74. Cf. Boston's other covenants. Ibid., II, 671. Thomas Boston, Memoirs, ed. George H. Morrison (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1899), pp. 149-50. For covenants signed by other men vide John Willison, The Practical Works of the Rev. John Willison (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1844), pp. 543-45. William Gordon, Diary, University of Edinburgh Library MS, p. 9. James Fairnie, Extracts from the Diary of James Fairnie, National Library of Scotland MSS, 3466, pp. 14-15. John Mill, Diary, ed. Gilbert Goudie (Edinburgh: at the University Press, 1889), pp. 33-34.

APPENDIX II

Sunday Schools

At the end of the eighteenth century the first Sunday Schools in Scotland were founded to provide religious instruction for children. The first such organizations formed by pastors were an outgrowth of Sunday catechizing sessions. Rev. James Landreth, who served Simprin, Boston's first charge, from 1725 to 1756, was credited with establishing one of the earliest Sunday schools.[1] The tombstone of David Blair, an Evangelical minister of Brechin from 1738 to 1769 long after Willison left the town, stated that he opened the first Sabbath evening school in Scotland about 1760.[2] Since these claims were made after the rise of the Sunday School movement, there is reason to question whether those schools were more than ordinary catechetical exercises. The Sunday classes held by Joseph Robertson Macgregor at the Edinburgh Gaelic Chapel were

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[1]Hew Scott, Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae, II (New ed.; Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1917), 62.

[2]Ibid., V, 376. These reports were not the only claims for the first Sunday School in Scotland. Vide John Sinclair, Analysis of the Statistical Account of Scotland, Part II (London: John Murray, 1826), pp. 97, 127.

probably similar to those of Landreth and Blair.[1] J. Kenneth Meir contended that the teaching of children to read was a consistent feature of the first Sunday Schools in England. That plus the use of helpers, who were frequently paid for their services, distinguished the Sunday School from a Sunday catechism class.[2] John Sinclair in his Analysis of the Statistical Account of Scotland mentioned that Sunday schools taught reading and religious doctrine. Apparently on that basis he judged schoolmaster Robert Cormack of Banchory Davinick to have been "the first who established a Sunday school," apparently meaning a Sunday school in Scotland.[3] There being no direct link between English and Scottish Sunday schools, however, except for the encouragement of Rowland Hill, the designation of Sunday school was applied in Scotland in general to classes

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[1]Macgregor catechized young people from May to October after Sunday afternoon worship services. John Kay, A Series of Original Portraits and Caricature Etchings (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1877), I, 153.

[2]J. Kenneth Meir, "The Origin and Development of the Sunday School Movement in England from 1780 to 1880, In Relation to the State Provision of Education," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Edinburgh Library), pp. 20-21, 41.

[3]Sinclair, Analysis of the Statistical Account . . . , II, 97, 127. Cf. "Statistical Account of Banchory Davinick," The Statistical Account of Scotland, ed. John Sinclair, XXI (Edinburgh: William Creech, 1799), 435.

held on Sundays for the religious instruction of children, whether reading was part of the program or not.[1]

Understood in that way, many "Sunday schools" rose up in Scotland in the last decade of the 1700's where ministers failed to meet the need for Christian education. The problem of neglected religious training was multiplied where, in the wake of the industrial revolution, parishes became overcrowded and children were put into mills on week-days instead of into schools. During 1787 in Edinburgh a group of ministers and church members, who observed that many working class children received no Christian education, formed the Society in Scotland for Promoting Religious Knowledge Among the Poor. In order to accomplish their purpose of "bringing the Ignorant Poor to an acquaintance with the important Truths of Religion, and of animating its professors to a conduct becoming the Gospel," they set up Sunday schools.[2] Soon similar societies sprang up in

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[1]Rowland Hill encouraged secession leaders in Scotland to form Sunday Schools as he had done in England. Rowland Hill, A Series of Letters Occasioned by the Late Pastoral Admonition of the Church of Scotland, as also Their Attempts to Suppress the Establishment of Sabbath Schools, Addressed to the Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home (Edinburgh: J. Ritchie, 1799).

[2]Rules of the Society in Scotland for Promoting Religious Knowledge Among the Poor (Edinburgh: n.p., 1787), p. 4. The Report of the Society in Scotland for Promoting Religious Knowledge Among the Poor (Leith: A. Allardice, 1815), p. 3. Cited hereafter as Rules of, or The Report of the S.S.P.R.K.A.P.

the manufacturing towns of Glasgow, Paisley, Greenock, Perth, and Aberdeen and later spread to country parishes.[1] In some places patrons instituted Sunday schools for the benefit of parish children whose parents gave them little, if any, religious training. Dr. Baird of Dunkeld and Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk commended the charity of the nobility in their parishes, and John Naismith looked for a benefactor to endow a Sunday school in Hamilton.[2]

As the Sunday school movement gathered momentum, proportionately few Church of Scotland pastors played an active part in supervising the instruction which was given through this means. By 1800 most of the schools were supported and controlled by organizations composed of members of Secession churches or of Church of Scotland laymen. The General Assembly of 1799 called for reports from presbyteries on the schools, including Sunday schools, within their bounds.[3] The Assembly was anxious that presbyteries exercise their legal authority

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[1]The Report of the S.S.P.R.K.A.P., pp. 3-4. Cf. "Report on Sabbath Schools 1875-76," General Assembly of the Church of Scotland Papers, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 2, Vol. 278, p. 5.

[2]Dr. Baird, "Parish of Dunkeld," The Statistical Account . . . , XX (1798), 426. Alexander Carlyle, "Parish of Inveresk," Ibid., XVI (1795), 31. John Naismith, "Parish of Hamilton," Ibid., II (1792), p. 201.

[3]The Principal Acts . . . , 1799, Act 12.

and responsibility to supervize the education of the land. With respect to Sunday Schools the Church of Scotland learned from the statements, which sixty of the seventy-eight presbyteries handed in, that much religious instruction was being taken out of its hands. Of three-hundred-sixty-seven Sunday schools listed in presbytery reports, seven, at the most, were taught by Church of Scotland pastors, and few more than seventy-five were inspected or approved by clergymen of the Established Church.[1] Almost four-fifths of the Sunday schools were operated independently of the Church.

A few ministers directly supervised the Sabbath schools in their parishes, but most who lent their support did so as members of Sunday school societies.[2] John Erskine and at least seventeen other Church of Scotland ministers contributed money and advice to the Society in Scotland for Promoting Religious Knowledge Among the Poor between 1787 and 1800.[3] Among the

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[1]"Presbytery Reports of Schools," General Assembly of the Church of Scotland Papers, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 2, Vol. 135, Part 12; Vol. 136, Part 13.

[2]Supervising pastors included David Ritchie, Edinburgh; John Scott, Muthil; James Crawford, Port Glasgow; Robert Smith, Cromarty; William Hardie Moncrieff, Annan; Thomas Mitchell, Lammington; James Thomson, Girvan. Ibid.

[3]Rules of the S.S.P.R.K.A.P., Appendix. William Taylor, The Education of the Children of the Poor, in the Principles of Religion, A Work of Charity Peculiarly Excellent (Edinburgh: J. Paterson, 1796), pp. 25-26.

various societies, the Paisley Sabbath Evening School Society had the fullest support of parish ministers, in that all the ministers of the town of Paisley became constituent members when the society was founded in 1798.[1] The societies which welcomed Established clergymen gave them authority to interview prospective teachers, to recommend textbooks, and to examine schools and scholars.[2] Pastors also encouraged the work of societies by addressing annual meetings.[3]

Where ministers gave their support, Sunday schools usually resembled the diets of catechizing which pastors had led earlier in the century. The regulations of the Dunkeld Sunday school, which Dr. Baird inserted into the statistical account of the parish, demonstrate this. When the school commenced, the minister and other leaders determined:

> I. That the school meet every Sunday during the year.
> II. That every meeting of the school begin and close with a prayer by the master.

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[1]"List of Sabbath Evening Schools within the Presbytery of Paisley," General Assembly of the Church of Scotland Papers, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 2, Vol. 135, Part 12.

[2]Rules of the S.S.P.R.K.A.P., pp. 10-11.

[3]Taylor, The Education of the Children of the Poor . . . , Appendix. Cf. the list of ministers who preached annually from 1797 for the Edinburgh Gratis Sabbath School Society, which operated more than half of the Sunday schools in Edinburgh in 1800. The Nineteenth Annual Report of the Edinburgh Gratis Sabbath School Society (Edinburgh: J. Hay & Co., 1816), Appendix.

> III. That before the last prayer, some verses be sung from the Psalms or from the Paraphrases and Translations of Sacred Scripture.
>
> IV. That the scholars be catechised on the first principles of religion.
>
> V. That a portion of the Bible, or a printed sermon, be read at every meeting, and that the master, in the course of proceeding, make such remarks as may explain and enforce what is read.
>
> VI. That on Sunday the scholars walk in regular order, with the master, to hear sermon, and take their seat in that part of the church, which is allotted to them.[1]

The remaining three regulations provided that the master keep a record of the sermon or Scripture passage read at each meeting and a roll of the pupils; that an annual, public examination be held to reward scholars with books for improvement or good behaviour; that the parish minister preach at the annual meeting; and that the collection be applied to the school.[2] The Society in Scotland for Promoting Religious Knowledge Among the Poor, which counted John Erskine among its founders, operated with similar rules. Catechists who were found duly qualified by Established clergymen taught classes every Lord's Day evening. Beginning as well as ending every meeting with prayer, catechists fulfilled their duties by reading and explaining portions of Scripture, by reading approved books, and primarily by examining students' knowledge

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[1]Sinclair, Analysis of the Statistical Account . . . , II, 97-98.

[2]Ibid.

of such catechisms as the Shorter Catechism and Willison's Mother's Catechism. Also catechists were expected to become personally acquainted with each pupil.[1] The content and methods of teaching remained basically the same as those of the classes of former parish ministers. Sunday school teachers kept rolls of scholars, concentrated on catechesis, and included prayer, praise and Scripture reading in each session.

As Sunday schools unconnected with pastors of the Church of Scotland mushroomed, opposition to the movement built up within the Church. The activities of the Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home, founded in 1798, received the brunt of official criticism. For the most part, men of Secession principles made up this organization, which sent out catechists and itinerant preachers to preach evangelistic messages and to teach evangelical doctrines in their Sunday schools. Instead of working with the parish minister's consent, this society competed in many places with him for the attention of the people. Having bypassed the opportunity to exercise leadership in the Sunday school movement, Established clergymen resented the challenge those rival religious teachers presented to their

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[1]Rules of the S.S.P.R.K.A.P., pp. 10-11. Cf. The Report of the S.S.P.R.K.A.P., pp. 8-10.

authority.[1] Moreover, members of the working class who taught classes came under suspicion, because the political philosophy which provoked the French Revolution was being spread among the poor and landless masses in Scotland as well as throughout Europe. Although the Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home prohibited its members from speaking about politics, many Church of Scotland ministers were distrustful of the labourers who served as catechists.[2] The feeling at the end of the eighteenth century within the Established Church towards Sunday schools and the societies responsible for them was aptly summarized in the "Report on Sabbath Schools" drawn up for the General Assembly in 1875-76.

> Having been originated and organised by sectarians, and its operations chiefly devoted to the instruction of the lower orders, the system [of Sunday school teaching] was in these times of high political excitement deemed favourable to the

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[1]From 1788-91 the Synod of Merse and Teviotdale considered an overture to hire parish schoolmasters to teach Sunday schools, but then dropped the matter completely. The Synod thus lost the opportunity to establish and to control parish Sunday schools. Records of the Provincial Synod of Merse and Teviotdale, 1772-1806, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 265, Vol. V, pp. 232, 238, 244, 249, 252, 262, 269.

[2]An Account of the Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home, p. 14. In 1800 the Edinburgh Presbytery pronounced most of the Sunday Schools in its district free of suspicion of political agitation. The Gratis Sunday School Society specifically forbade it. On other Sunday schools no judgment was pronounced. Report of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, 30 April 1800, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 2, Vol. 136, Part 13.

> cause of democracy, and was even stigmatised as a hotbed of disaffection and sedition. Various circumstances induced the General Assembly to bend all its influence against a method of instruction which it regarded with jealousy and doubt.[1]

The General Assembly of 1799 issued a Pastoral Admonition decrying the work of the "missionaries" of the Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home and of other "false teachers" who erected Sunday schools and held "secret meetings."[2] This action increased the opposition which the majority of Church of Scotland pastors demonstrated against Sunday schools.[3] Enrollments of Sunday schools dropped when members of the Established Church who heeded the Assembly's warning withdrew

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[1]"Report on Sabbath Schools 1875-76," p. 5.

[2]The Principal Acts . . . , 1799, Act 11, pp. 38-42.

[3]In the Presbytery of Aberlour the sheriff closed a missionary Sunday school at the request of a parish minister. "Report of the Presbytery of Aberlour on Schools," General Assembly of the Church of Scotland Papers, Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 2, Vol. 136, Part 13. An Aberdeenshire Presbytery summoned some laymen for having taught young people on Sunday, considering that an offense. "Report on Sabbath Schools 1875-76," pp. 5-6. A cartoon in Kay's Portraits showed the Rev. William Moodie turning poor children out of a Sunday school to which he had been invited by the teachers. The minister neither examined the pupils nor tried to learn the motives of the teachers. This incident was played up against the Moderates, who were quite prejudiced against Sunday schools. Kay, . . . Portraits . . . , I, 356-57.

their children.[1] However, the primary result for the Church was to forego for some time the opportunity to develop, guide and manage Sunday schools for beneficial Christian education.

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[1]"Report from the Presbytery of St. Andrews respecting Schoolmasters and Teachers Summoned before them, in consequence of the Order of Assembly 1799." Scottish Record Office, Church of Scotland Records MSS, 2, Vol. 135, Part 12.

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